

Department of World Cultures
University of Helsinki

CONSTRUCTING THE ROLE OF A GREAT POWER

CHINA'S PERIPHERAL RELATIONS, TERRITORIAL DISPUTES,
AND ROLE CHANGE, 2002–2012

TEEMU NAARAJÄRVI

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be presented, by due permission of the Faculty of Arts at
the University of Helsinki, for public examination in lecture room 1,
Metsätalo, on 26 May 2017, at 12 noon.

Helsinki 2017

© Teemu Naarajärvi 2017

ISBN 978-951-51-3162-1 (paperback)

ISBN 978-951-51-3163-8 (PDF)

UNIGRAFIA

Helsinki 2017

ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses the role development of the People's Republic of China during the time between the 16th and 18th party congresses of the Chinese Communist Party (2002 and 2012). Employing the theoretical framework of constructivist role theory, this study argues that during this time China's international roles – social positions based on national role conceptions as well as domestic and external expectations towards those roles – went through significant changes that were originally resisted by the Chinese state.

By tracing the processes of China's role change I create a historical narrative in which I compare three different cases of China's peripheral foreign policy: Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Japan. All these cases involve China's territorial disputes, highlighting the interactional nature of a nation's international roles, and giving this work additional focus.

As my primary material I use speeches of the Chinese top leadership during the time frame of my study. By analysing the speech acts of the national leaders and by comparing them to developments in Chinese foreign policy, I reconstruct the process of China's role change in each of the three cases. To provide additional evidence, I also use Chinese articles in two major international relations journals in China, 现代国际关系 (*Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*) and 国际问题研究 (*Guoji Wenti Yanjiu*), as well as selected interviews among scholars of international relations in the Sinophone World.

The first of my case studies discusses China's role change in Central Asia, where China, according to my study, first *learned* how to enact the role of a great power. The second case study looks into the development of China's international role towards Southeast Asia, where the ongoing disputes on the South China Sea and China's need to engage more with ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, led China to *adapt* its great power role. The third and final case study analyses the resistance that China's great power role has met with Japan, making both role learning and adapting ineffective. Thus, China has resorted to *altercasting*, by continuing to emphasise Japan's inadequate handling of its wartime history, thus trying to undermine the position of Japan.

With this dissertation I also test the applicability of role theory in the study of Chinese foreign policy. Until recently, role theory has been employed mainly in the study of democratic countries and it needs to be adjusted to the study of authoritarian states.

Keywords: China, foreign policy analysis, role theory, peripheral diplomacy, territorial disputes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has received financial support from several sources. I would like to particularly thank the support of Emil Aaltonen Foundation and Joel Toivola Foundation for the numerous research grants they provided for my work. In addition, the field work grant of Kone Foundation and the support of Nordic Centre at Fudan University, Shanghai, made an extensive stay in China possible during my research in 2013–2014. Moreover, the former Graduate School of Contemporary Asian Studies provided both financial and academic support for my work in its earlier stages.

At the University of Helsinki, my colleagues at the former Institute of Asian and African Studies, nowadays Department of World Cultures, have provided me with not only a stimulating academic work environment but also an exceptional epistemic community of specialists of different times and places. My long journey at that department has taken place alongside Saana Svärd and Riikka Tuori, although at a noticeable slower pace than them. And when, after my frequent stays abroad, I found myself comfortably back in room B205 with Patricia Berg, Ilkka Lindstedt, and Inka Nokso-Koivisto, it truly felt like returning home. Being the slow writer I am, towards the end of my work my roommates changed to Antti Laine, Kaisa Kantola, Joonas Maristo, and Simona Olivieri (who also helped me with the layout of the dissertation) without any noticeable change in the atmosphere of that remarkable room.

Upon exiting (reluctantly) that room I meet people such as Sylvia Akar, Lotta Aunio, Thera Crane, Alex Fleisch, Jouni Harjumäki, Sanae Ito, Hannu Juusola, Jonna Katto, Mikko Viitamäki and Xenia Zeiler. They, too, have played an important part in this academic endeavour. Perhaps nobody has, however, shown the true spirit of area studies as clearly as my supervisor, Professor of East Asian Studies Juha Janhunen, who long time ago accepted without flinching a PhD student with a very vague idea of something related to Chinese foreign policy. For a renowned linguist this might be seen as a step away from his comfort zone, but Juha's trust in my ability to finish what I promised has always kept me going.

Towards the very end of my PhD, the Department of World Cultures at the University of Helsinki was lucky to gain Julie Yu-Wen Chen as its Professor of Chinese Studies. This meant that I was no longer alone in my focus on China's external relations, and I have tried to take advantage of this development to the full.

China scholars of Finland are no longer the small club it used to be, and it is not possible to acknowledge the input of all those people I have worked with while trying to understand China better. However, people like Raisa Asikainen, Obert Hodzi, Jyrki Kallio, Outi Luova, Mikael Mattlin, Matti Nojonen, Lauri Paltemaa, Taru Salmenkari, Elina Sinkkonen and Juha A. Vuori all deserve my warmest gratitude.

Outside of Finland the task of thanking people becomes an even lengthier one, and I could never do it properly. However, writing this dissertation would not have been possible without the inputs of Chen Zhimin, Ren Xiao, Jing Yijia, Zhao Huasheng, and Liu Chunrong at Fudan University; Jin Canrong and Shi Yinhong at Renmin University of China; Shih Chih-yu at National Taiwan University; Huang Chiung-chiu at National Chengchi University, and of course the now-retired Joseph Cheng at the City University of Hong Kong.

My external examiners, Shaun Breslin and Jörn-Carsten Gottwald, gave extremely valuable feedback on my work. The same goes with Marc Lanteigne and Niall Duggan, who have gone way beyond the responsibility of a colleague and friend in commenting various drafts of this work, while Marc also frequently helped me in acquiring research funding.

As the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki limits the lengths of its PhD dissertations, I am not able to thank my beloved wife, best friend, unparalleled academic mentor, and partner in crime Merja Polvinen at the length and with the sincerity that would be even remotely appropriate. Thus I will merely acknowledge the fact that every single idea in this study was firstly inspired by her, later read by her and lastly, corrected by her into a better formulation. The remaining mistakes found in the dissertation were inserted there by the writer in the middle of the night without consulting her.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CBDR	Common but differentiated responsibilities
CC	Central Committee (of the CCP)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CICIR	China Institutes of Contemporary Relations
CIIS	China Institute of International Studies
EAS	East Asia Summit
EEZ	Economic Exclusive Zone
ETIM	East Turkestan Islamic Movement
EU	European Union
FALSG	Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (of CCP)
FMPRC	Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China
FOCAC	Forum of China-Africa Cooperation
FP	Foreign Policy
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	(The study of) International Relations
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party (of Japan)
LSG	Leading Small Group (of the CCP)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NRC	National Role Conception
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PB	Political Bureau, Politburo (of the CCP)
PRC	People's Republic of China
SASS	Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
SIIS	Shanghai Institute of International Studies
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organisation
XUAR	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (of China)

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

In accordance with the contemporary style and international standards, I have used *hanyu pinyin* [汉语拼音] system throughout for transliterating Chinese into Latin alphabet. The only exception to this rule is made with the Chinese names of those individuals, who themselves use some other method of romanization. In those cases, their preferred system is used. Also, as it is customary in Chinese to write the surname before the given name, I have followed this practise unless the individuals in question have themselves used the form more familiar to the western reader.

Translations from Chinese to English, unless otherwise mentioned, are mine. In some cases, official translations of the original Chinese speeches or statements are also available. When such translations are used, the language of the source is made clear in the citation.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT..... ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

ABBREVIATIONS.....v

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS vi

CONTENTS vii

1. INTRODUCTION.....1

1.1. STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY2

1.2. ON THE STUDY OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY4

1.2.1. Peripheral Diplomacy and China’s Rise6

1.2.2. A Great Power with Chinese Characteristics11

1.2.3. China’s Territorial Disputes.....15

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS, MATERIAL, AND METHODS OF THIS STUDY 19

**2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS,
AND ROLE THEORY29**

2.1. ORIGINS OF IR: LIBERALISM AND REALISM.....30

2.1.1. Neorealism, Neoliberalism and the Proliferation of IR34

2.2. REFLECTIVISM37

2.2.1. Constructivism38

2.3. FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS.....41

2.3.1. Structure-Agency and Ideational-Material Divisions
in Foreign Policy Analysis.....43

2.3.2. Speech Acts as Foreign Policy.....46

2.4. ROLE THEORY47

2.4.1. Origins and Key Concepts of Role Theory49

2.4.2. Role Theory in the 2000s.....52

2.4.3. Strategies of Role Change.....64

2.4.4. Previous Research on China’s Foreign Policy Roles.....68

3. LEARNING THE ROLE OF A GREAT POWER:	
CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIA.....	74
3.1. CHINA’S HISTORICAL ROLES TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA	75
3.1.1. China’s Territorial Disputes in Central Asia	77
3.1.2. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation	81
3.1.3. Xinjiang and Uyghur Separatism.....	83
3.2. CHINA’S ROLE CHANGE IN CENTRAL ASIA.....	87
3.2.1. Building the SCO	88
3.2.2. Defending Non-Interference	95
3.2.3. Taking the Role of a Great Power.....	102
3.3. CONCLUSIONS: LEARNING THE ROLE OF A GREAT POWER	110
4. ADAPTING THE ROLE OF A GREAT POWER:	
CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA.....	116
4.1. CHINA’S HISTORICAL ROLES TOWARDS SOUTHEAST ASIA	119
4.1.1. ASEAN	124
4.1.2. China’s Territorial Disputes on the South China Sea	127
4.2. CHINA’S ROLE CHANGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.....	133
4.2.1. Slow Deviation from Peripheral Diplomacy.....	135
4.2.2. The Return of the Great Powers.....	141
4.3. CONCLUSIONS: ADAPTING THE ROLE OF A GREAT POWER	152
5. ALTERCASTING A ROLE OF AN AGGRESSOR:	
CHINA AND JAPAN.....	158
5.1. CHINA’S HISTORICAL ROLES TOWARDS JAPAN	160
5.1.1. The Territorial Dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands	164
5.1.2. Domestic Opinion	168
5.2. CHINA’S ROLE CHANGE TOWARDS JAPAN	170
5.2.1. Dancing with the Wolves.....	172
5.2.2. Building Better Relations.....	181
5.2.3. Escalation of the Dispute	190
5.3. CONCLUSIONS: ALTERCASTING JAPAN	196

6. CONCLUSION.....	200
6.1. CHINA’S PERIPHERAL DIPLOMACY, TERRITORIAL DISPUTES, AND ROLE CHANGE	201
6.2. CHINA’S GREAT POWER ROLE	207
6.3. ROLE THEORY AND CHINA.....	211
BIBLIOGRAPHY	216

1. INTRODUCTION

Roles define our lives; they demarcate who we are and what we do. Humans, in their interactions with each other, behave according to complicated sets of understandings related to themselves, their identities, values, and needs. In the daily lives of people these understandings meet the expectations of not only of other individuals, but of the surrounding society as a whole. When combined, these expectations and understandings result in roles that are often multiple and sometimes even outright contradictory. Roles such as that of a child, parent or spouse – intimate as they are – face the expectations of not only those directly involved, but as social constructs of contemporary society they are impacted on by the wider structural influence often understood as common values, or as a culture.

A tradition started by Kalevi Holsti (1970) and followed by for example Stephen G. Walker (1987) and later Harnisch and Maull (2001), as well as Harnisch, Frank and Maull (2011) has brought the analysis of roles to the study of the behaviour of states on the international arena. While states are not individuals, their actions are also influenced by both the internal (ego) and the external (alter) impacts, both social and tangible.¹ Within the study of international relations, these impacts are discussed mostly as issues related to structure and agency. It is on the interaction of structure and agency that role theory focuses, and, according to Marijke Breuning (2011: 16), it “promises to build an empirical bridge” between the two.

In this study, I will analyse how the international roles of the People’s Republic of China (henceforth also China) towards its near-abroad have changed during the time between the 16th (2002) and 18th (2012) party congresses of the

¹ Ever since Plato’s *Republic*, the idea of state as an individual (or an organism) has been common both in the study of politics and in common parlance. While this analogy is not without problems and has in many cases been shown to be a fallacy, role theory, as described later in this work, offers a useful approach to this seemingly natural, yet problematic way of conceptualising state behaviour on the international arena. For an explanation of this analogy in terms of international relations, see e.g. Wendt (2004).

Chinese Communist Party.² With ‘roles’ this study refers to “the notions of actors about who they are, what they would like to do” (Harnisch, Frank and Maull 2011: 1–2). Thus, the roles that I study in this dissertation are social positions of sovereign states and, in a manner of speaking, behavioural aspects of status. Moreover, these roles are constructed by the joint impact of structure and agency, as described in depth in the second chapter of this study.

I argue that roles are especially good frameworks of analysis when we want to investigate the changes in a country’s foreign policy during times of major restructuring of that country’s resources and capabilities. Such restructuring is often accompanied by more abstract, conceptual change in the idea of the country, and together the abstract idea and the concrete resources and capabilities form the building-blocks of role-oriented foreign policy analysis. In the case of China, during the first decade of the 2000s the country took the seemingly final step into the role of a “responsible great power” (Hu 2012b), both in the material and the ideational sense. Thus, an in-depth study of China’s role development, or the process of acquiring new sets of expectations both from inside and outside of the country, is required in order to explain the Chinese foreign policy of today. A role-theoretical approach provides us with an explanation of both China’s domestic and external expectations towards this role of a great power.

1.1. Structure of This Study

In this dissertation, I will first look into the Chinese post-Cold War foreign policy and its development from so-called peripheral diplomacy into something resembling a foreign policy of a great power. As a background to this study, I will argue that unlike it has sometimes been suggested, this change was not particularly sudden, but has instead taken at least a decade. In the following section of this introduction I will analyse the concept of a great power, both in the traditional sense

² By ‘China’ I refer to the views and actions of the Chinese political elites, while naturally even the People’s Republic, ruled by an authoritarian communist party, is not a unitary actor. Role theory (as explained in chapter 2.4) lays a particular emphasis on the views of the political elites in defining country’s roles.

and in its new, Chinese version, paying attention to the differences between the *status* of a great power and the *role* of a great power. I will also discuss briefly the significance of territorial disputes in the study of Chinese foreign policy, before presenting the actual research questions, material and methods of this study.

Chapter 2 provides a wider discussion of the theoretical framework used in this research. First introducing the overall development of international relations (IR) as a field of study, the chapter continues by focusing on constructivist IR and foreign policy analysis in greater detail, before moving to the specific theory of this study, role theory, looking both at its origin in the 1970s and at its ‘second coming’ in the 2000s. Throughout this chapter, I will keep in mind the applicability of role theory to the study of Chinese foreign policy.

All three of my case studies, discussed in chapters 3–5, analyse China’s role change between the 16th and 18th party congresses of the CCP (2002–2012). I will argue that it was during this decade that China stepped firmly on the path towards the role of a great power, which was then realised during the second term of Hu Jintao (2007–2012). What my three chosen cases have in common is that they involve territorial disputes between China and its neighbouring countries. However, the strategies of China’s role change, as well as the subsequent foreign policies realised by the country, vary greatly between the three cases.

The first of my case studies discusses China’s role change in Central Asia, where Chinese post-Cold War foreign policy met with several new neighbouring states in the early 1990s. After the initial establishment of a regional cooperation mechanism in the form of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (in the 1990s known as the Shanghai 5 Forum), China’s role change here during the 2000s has been a considerable success. In fact, in this chapter I will argue that it was in Central Asia where China first learned how to enact a role of a great power.

The second case study looks into the development of China’s international roles towards Southeast Asia, where, unlike in Central Asia, China has not been able to construct as coherent a role set, mainly due to the ongoing disputes on the South China Sea and the fact that China cannot control ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the way it controls the SCO. Thus, in order to bring its

different roles into conformity, China has been adapting its great power role while at the same time trying to keep the issue of South China Sea away from ASEAN, which it sees mainly as a tool for economic integration.

The third and final case study in this dissertation analyses the problems China's great power role has met with Japan. Due to the problematic history between the two countries, as well as the way this history is used by both, Japan has resisted China's great power role, making role learning (as in the case of Central Asia) or adapting (as in the case of Southeast Asia) ineffective for China. In the case of Japan, China has resorted to altercasting, yet another form of role change, in which China has been emphasising Japan's inadequate handling of its wartime history, thus trying to undermine the position of Japan.

In the concluding chapter, I discuss the nature of China's great power role, the applicability of role theory to the study of Chinese foreign policy, as well as the potential impact of this study on role theory itself.

1.2. On the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy

During the first 15 years of this century, the increasing economic and political influence of the People's Republic of China (PRC) has led scholars of international relations and Chinese foreign policy analysis to produce a massive amount of new research. China's rise, as the phenomenon is often called, is arguably *the* change in the international system since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Cold War communist bloc in the early 1990s. However, the ramifications of this ongoing shift of global attention to East Asia are still largely uncertain.

Thus, the question posed by many and answered by some seems to be: *What does China plan to do?* The answers so far have been mainly divided into pessimistic views, often represented by the IR 'realists', and the more optimistic opinions of the 'liberalists' within the field. While the former see the future clouded by armed conflicts and possibly even a major war between China and the United States with its allies (Mearsheimer 2010) the latter explain that the growing economic interdependence and increased contacts between China and the rest of the world will prevent such a catastrophic turn of events (Johnston 2008). Both fields

of study are usually interested in the structures of global governance and its implications for China's foreign policy. An increasingly strong tradition, represented by the constructivist trend of international relations, has been looking into China itself, concerning itself with the domestic variables within Chinese foreign policy (see e.g. Carlson 2011). Questions posed by these scholars often show interest in questions of Chinese identity, historical understanding and culture, issues strongly linked to the values and norms that form the core of constructivist IR research and foreign policy analysis (Kubáľková 2015: 19–23). Into this increasing amount of scholarship must be added the Chinese domestic attempts to solve the puzzle. Chinese IR scholarship, like almost all academic research within China, has grown at pace with the increased economic possibilities within the country. However, even if “IR theory with Chinese characteristics” could be seen as a welcome alternative to the otherwise western-dominated field, some scholars have also raised the problem of teleology in Chinese scholarship: that it is too closely connected with the political aims of the country (see e.g. Kim 2016).

This dissertation aims to add to this increasingly unrestrained volume of information. In the end, the question that this research answers is the one posed by many others, both before this work and for sure, after it as well: What will happen when China gains even more international influence than it has already amassed? The implications of China's increased influence are already seen all over the world: in the change of voting power within institutions of global governance such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in the increased economic and political activities of China in e.g. Africa and, not least, in China's immediate neighbourhood.

Against this backdrop China's rise creates an even more striking picture, as the country remains one of the few states still committed to the communist ideology, albeit in a modernised format known as the ‘socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics.’ Leaving the detailed analysis of the Chinese political system aside, it is clear that China is not governed according to the liberal democratic values and

norms that are considered mainstream in the majority of western countries.³ China is ruled by an authoritarian single party that allows the other political parties no possibility to influence the way the country is governed. This is especially so in the case of foreign policy, which falls strongly within the purview of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In fact, like many other policy issues, the PRC foreign policy decisions are discussed, framed and decided within the higher echelons party structure before being executed through the governmental organs (Lai and Kang 2014).

For many of China's neighbours the combination of a highly secretive decision-making process, clear democracy deficit, and an unparalleled increase in Chinese national power has caused concern. China, due to its tumultuous history during the last 150–200 years, has developed into a country with a suspicious attitude towards many of its neighbours, a strong feeling of victimhood, and an increasingly nationalistic political undercurrent, as well as lately more and more assertive foreign policy towards countries it disagrees with. This has been especially clear in East and Southeast Asia, where China is still engaged in territorial disputes with several of its neighbours. In this study I argue, in agreement with Johnston (2013), that this change has been in the making for a longer period of time. To do this, I track the process of China's role change in the 2002–2012 era of Hu Jintao's leadership. By analysing China's international roles in its own near-abroad, I argue that China's assertive actions in East and Southeast Asia from 2010 onwards have been role enactment of a great power. While some of China's actions have indeed been unprecedented, they can be usually explained through the changed role of China in each context.

1.2.1. Peripheral Diplomacy and China's Rise

At the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, China was in a difficult position. The economic reforms of the 1980s, while generally bringing new opportunities to the

³ For an overview on the Chinese political system, its special characteristics and contemporary challenges, see Tony Saich's *Governance and Politics of China* (2015).

Chinese citizens, had also been met with resistance within the country, culminating in the student protests of 1989. The violent crackdown of these protests on Beijing's Tian'anmen Square and in many other cities of China in June 1989 had led to a widespread condemnation of China by western countries and many of their allies. The United States, as well as many other countries in the West,⁴ had imposed economic and political sanctions, as well as an arms embargo on China (Cheng 1998). On the wider international arena, with the end of the Cold War and fall of the Soviet Union, China lost its leveraging power between the two previously competing superpowers, power that China had been using skilfully even when its foreign policy was otherwise caught in the ideological struggles of the late Maoist era.

China's faltering international position was visible in its bilateral relations, too. At the turn of the decade, even its traditional allies among the developing world seemed less enthusiastic about China, and Grenada, Belize and Liberia had established diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1989. However, the normalization of the relations, broken since the 1960s, with 'key third world' countries like Indonesia, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia compensated for the loss (Harding 1990: 15). In any case, the post-Cold War world order, with its strong tendency towards liberal democracy (as argued by Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History and the Last Man*, 1992), was suitable for neither the values nor the interests of the Chinese Communist Party. In essence, China had only a few friends left, especially among the developed countries. The new leadership of China, headed by Jiang Zemin (Chairman of the CCP 1989–2002), felt it necessary to restore China's relations at least with its neighbours, and convince them of China's non-threatening nature. Many of these neighbouring countries, such as Japan and the 'Asian Tigers' of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, were potential sources of foreign direct investments desperately needed for further economic growth in China. It was

⁴ Although I am aware of the difficult connotations associated with the terms 'the West' and 'western,' I use them in this work in the traditional sense, referring to liberal-democratic societies with European origins. However, in order not to emphasise the normative connotations of these terms, I do not capitalise the adjective form of the word.

time for a new kind of foreign policy, or, at least a new way of explaining that policy to the rest of the world.

China's quest for a more secure position, both politically and economically, came in the form of peripheral [*zhoubian*, 周边] diplomacy. In accordance with its name, the peripheral diplomacy aimed to develop better relations with China's neighbouring countries through economic and political interaction. China's peripheral diplomacy was soon complemented by a matching concept of security policy, the new security concept [*xin anquan guan*, 新安全观]. With a thinly veiled criticism of the U.S.-led world order of the 1990s, the purpose of the new security concept was to go "beyond unilateral security and seek common security through mutually beneficial cooperation" (FMPRC 2002).

Taken together, China's peripheral diplomacy and the new security concept seemed to answer also to some of the liberal demands of the post-Cold War era. The idea of trust and security-building through extensive economic, political and cultural connections might be straight from the classics of liberal IR, but there were notable differences as well. Strict emphasis on state sovereignty and territorial integrity swam strongly against the political currents of the 1990s IR. Moreover, the emphasis on the role of the United Nations, on the peaceful resolving of disputes, reforms of the international organisations, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as the combating of non-traditional security threats all became essential components of China's new security concept of the 1990s (FMPRC 2002).⁵

What became an especially prominent feature in China's foreign and security policy in the 1990s was the emphasis on regional, multilateral organisations, such as the ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Shanghai 5, later the SCO. Together with the six-party talks on the North Korean

⁵ Many of the values promoted in the new security concept derive already from the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in the Sino-Indian relations in the 1950s: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence (BR 2014).

nuclear programme in the early 2000s,⁶ a clear tendency towards a multilateral approach on both economic and security issues becomes visible, as does the regional emphasis of this approach. But while scholars like Marc Lanteigne (2016: 156) have seen China's peripheral diplomacy mainly focused on the Pacific Rim, Central Asia could, in fact, be taken as the biggest success for China's *zhoubian* diplomacy. It was here, I argue, that China managed to come up with a largely successful framework of regional cooperation that has been able to cope with China's increasing influence and subsequent learning of the great power role.

As a whole, China's peripheral diplomacy was, however, only a mixed success. China did manage to decrease tensions with many of its neighbours and, to certain extent, accelerate economic integration in East and Southeast Asia. But the heyday of China's peripheral diplomacy was the 1990s, and in the 2000s country started to focus on cross-regional diplomacy (Lanteigne 2016: 178). While peripheral diplomacy has never completely disappeared from the Chinese foreign relations, in the first years of the new millennium it seemed to give way to a more dynamic view of China's image. Peripheral diplomacy, as a China-centric concept, implies a static nature of foreign policy and does not pay attention to the rapidly developing influence of the Chinese state. Especially China's phenomenal economic growth made it soon clear that the whole country was developing with such speed that the concept 'China's rise' became known far and wide, raising concerns especially among its neighbours (The Economist 2004).

To alleviate such concerns, in 2005 Zheng Bijian, an influential CCP member with earlier positions in the central government, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and the CCP Party School, published in *Foreign Policy* an article "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status."⁷ In the article Zheng (2005) argued that China was still a developing country with plenty of domestic problems, and that it would still take decades for China to become even a "medium-

⁶ Six-party talks, discontinued in 2009, included both Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States.

⁷ While the term "China's peaceful rise" [中国的和平崛起] is already from the 1990s, it started to gain prominence in Chinese official rhetoric after 2003 (see Deepak 2012).

level developed country.” But despite such an emphasis on obstructions to development, Zheng (ibid.) did admit that while not seeking “hegemony or predominance,” China was rising.

However, only couple of months later, in December 2005, China published a White Paper called “China’s Peaceful Development Road” (China.org.cn 2005). Apparently, the term ‘rise’ was considered as too aggressive and was replaced with the more benign ‘development’ (Deepak 2012).⁸ Moreover, it was much more convenient for China to frame its change as development rather than rise: the latter brings up questions such as rise from and to where, and over whom? The most likely answers would have been from “a developing country” to “a great power.” But China had at that time still many reasons for continuing to call itself a developing country, such as the political support of many developing countries and the “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR) towards the use of non-renewable resources.⁹ Moreover, in many aspects – and mostly due to the massive population of the country – China still is a developing country, and is acknowledged as such by, for example, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Fish 2014).

Furthermore, China is often seen as the leader of the developing world. After the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949, the country assisted many liberation movements in Southeast Asia and Africa in the 1950s and 60s, and in the 1970s it tried to promote its own ‘Three Worlds Theory’ in the United Nations. Deng Xiaoping, while trying to counter the view of China as a leader, had to admit that his country was often seen as one (Deng 1994). Later, China’s actions in, for example, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), in the Kyoto Protocol,

⁸ The term ‘rise’ [崛起], with its abrupt and sudden connotations, did not disappear from academic usage: between the years of 2000 and 2015, there were over 35,000 articles published in Chinese academic journals that discussed the Rise of China [中国崛起]. Of the total, almost 60% (20,895) have been published since 2010, underlining the parallel trends of the growth of Chinese IR scholarship and the interest shown in that scholarship towards the expanding influence of the motherland (CAJ 2016).

⁹ CBDR refers to the idea that while all countries in the world have a common responsibility for the global environment, the developed countries should carry more of the economic burden arising from its protection.

and in G20 meetings have continued this image of China's historical role as the leader of the developing world, while its changed needs and interests have made it sometimes difficult for China to keep this role (Duggan and Naarajärvi 2015).¹⁰

In fact, China's massive economic growth has made it obvious that while in many aspects the country is still far from western industrialised economies, it is no longer a developing country either, at least according to the traditional standards of the concept. Thus, it is only natural that, when traveling the 'road of peaceful development' towards the status and role of a great power [大国], China has been attempting to change the meaning of the concept of great power as well.

1.2.2. A Great Power with Chinese Characteristics

Power is a central concept in the study of international relations. As there are several aspects of power, such as hard, soft, smart, economic or even comprehensive, it is hardly a surprise that the term itself, as well as its usage in academia has been criticised. However, in most cases power is seen as *influence*, something that can be used to get whatever is wanted (Brown and Ainley 2009: 90–91). Moreover, analogously to individuals, some states have less influence, some more. And while the assignment of those actors on the international arena with substantially more influence tend not to be univocal, the concept of *great power* is commonly used for such countries.

The People's Republic of China, even with many attributes often linked with the great powers (such as permanent membership of the UN Security Council and an acknowledged status as a nuclear power) has in the past often shown reluctance to accept such a definition of itself, even when the U.S. President Nixon was ready to bestow the title already in early 1970s (Waltz 1979/2010: 130). Even so, if ranked according to Waltz (ibid: 131) and assessed according to the size of its

¹⁰ In the case of FOCAC, it has become increasingly clear that while the cooperation between China and the African countries started as a partnership of developing countries, the gap in development between them has only increased in the 2000s, emphasizing the leadership of the former in the framework. Thus the case of China-Africa cooperation, while outside the scope of this study, seems to support the findings made here.

population and territory, availability of resources, size of the economy and military, as well as the stability of its politics, China of the 2000s is clearly among the top countries in the world – a great power.¹¹

This study, however, does not focus on power in this realist sense of the concept. Instead, in analysing the movement in China's international roles towards that of a great power, I am interested in China's view of itself and of the particular social position understood as a *role of a great power*. This change has not followed automatically from China's economic, military and political development, nor did China acknowledge it immediately. While towards the end of the 2000s China was acting increasingly assertively, there seemed to be no consensus within the country of the direction China should take on the international scene. Within the official policy of "major powers are the key, surrounding areas are the first priority, developing countries are the foundation, and multilateral forums are the important stage," David Shambaugh (2011: 9–10) identified seven different perspectives on "Chinese Global Identities," ranging from Nativism to Globalism, and including directions of thought such as "Major Powers," "Asia First," and "Global South." Thus, it seems that while in the 2000s China has achieved many aspects of a great power, it has still struggled with the concept itself, as well as with the ramifications of its own achievements.

One reason for this reluctance to embrace both the status and the role of a great power comes from China's strong links to the developing world. As was discussed above, the People's Republic of China has portrayed itself since its establishment as one of the developing countries and part of the global south. These countries often share a view of themselves as the victims of the great powers, with special reference to the era of colonialization and imperialism. China's own experiences of the late 19th and early 20th centuries match these feelings, and the identity shift from a developing country with a traumatic past to a great power with capability to influence weaker members of the international community is not easy,

¹¹ Waltz, as a proponent of realist IR is particularly interested in the 'hard' aspects of power (see chapter 2.1.1 of this study).

especially if China wants to retain the political support of the developing countries it has experienced so far.

This negative legacy of the great powers, together with the expectation of leadership associated with the position, has been a difficult combination on China's road towards identifying itself a great power. China of the 2010s has been willing to be seen as a "big" (or major) "developing country" [发展中大国] (Wang 2013a; FMPRC 2013b), a phrase which can be interpreted both as a large developing country and as a country that is developing into a major power. While this can be seen as an opportunistic move aimed at retaining the benefits of being considered a developing country while demanding more influence on the global level, it is not just that. Instead, China is, as described above, in many aspects still a developing country, and the reasons for its current relationships with other developing countries are complex and far-reaching.

The other central aspect of the challenge in assuming the *role* of a great power has for China been the expectation that great powers should be "responsible stakeholders" of the existing international system (Zoellick 2005). While China is often seen as a challenger to the current world order, it has also been one of the main beneficiaries of that order. Thus this demand would not have been so difficult to accept if China would have been free to define for itself what "responsibility" means.¹² But as role theory explains (see chapter 2.4.) the alter expectations towards the actor are a major part of a role, and China has not been able to struggle free from the western expectations of responsibility. But as with the idea of a developing country, China has tried to change the concept, instead of rejecting it outright.

Contemporary China, as argued by Shaun Breslin (2010) could be described as a "dissatisfied, responsible great power," a country willing to influence the global order while not subscribing to the western values nor to the concept of responsibility deriving from those values. While clearly using the concept of great power in terms

¹² While Zoellick saw 'responsibility' to materialise as behaviour that would sustain the current international system, China, a vocal critic of the western-led world order, naturally did not want to be tied in this narrow definition of responsible behaviour, nor did it want to be seen as overtly revisionist either.

of classical IR in his discussion of China's international influence, Breslin (2010: 56) nevertheless pays attention to the "Chinese perceptions of China's global role" in a manner not far from role theory and the approach selected for this study. Later and in a similar vein, he has presented (in the context of China's position in the international order) China's reluctance to acknowledge itself a great power (Breslin 2013: 621–622), and the same view has been presented from an explicitly role theoretical perspective, with more focused case studies, for example by Gottwald and Duggan (2011) and Naarajärvi (2014).

Today, the Chinese view of their country as a great power, both in terms of status and role, is fairly well established, as exemplified by the statements of its leaders (see e.g., Hu 2012b). Furthermore, China sees itself as nothing less than a player of a "role of a *responsible* great power" [负责任大国作用] (*ibid.*, italics added). However, with responsibility the Chinese leaders mean something different than the leaders of western countries or the largely western-derived liberal IR scholarship. When in the West responsibility in foreign policy is usually seen as something that upholds norms and values such as democracy, liberalism, human rights and the western-dominated international order in general, China sees responsibility in terms more familiar to its domestic politics.

For China, playing the role of a responsible great power means continuing the 'opening up' of the country, promoting strong but sustainable and balanced growth, narrowing down the gap between the North and the South and supporting the other developing countries to increase their self-development (Hu 2012b). Thus China links responsibility with the country's efforts to facilitate economic development in both domestic and international contexts, as the economic development is seen as a prerequisite for stability, which in itself safeguards peace. Thus, a great power is a country that is capable of preserving peace, and the best way to do this, according to Chinese leaders, is economic development (FMPRC 2012d).

In its foreign policy, after 2014 China's "great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics" [有中国特色的大国外交] has been receiving increasing

attention.¹³ Many scholars have seen in it a distinct departure from the low-profile [*taoguang yanghui*, 韬光养晦] approach¹⁴ to the international issues, advocated since the days of Deng Xiaoping, and bringing up initiatives such as Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Belt and Road [*yidai yilu*, 一带一路], and even Xi Jinping's "China Dream" [*zhongguo meng*, 中国梦] (Hu 2016: 165–166). However, for example Shen Dingli, Professor of International Relations at Fudan University, has claimed that China was merely "a power," not a great power, as China has not been able to solve some of its territorial issues. According to Shen (2013), a great power would be able to do this while at the same time being committed to peace.

1.2.3. China's Territorial Disputes

Today, the People's Republic of China has land borders with 16 separate political entities, with 14 of them sovereign countries and two (Hong Kong and Macau) special administrative regions of China. China's land borders are over 22,000 kilometres long. With borders like these, combined with the tumultuous history of China during the last 150 years, it is hardly a surprise that China has had, and still has, several disputes with its neighbours relating to its borders. Since its founding, the PRC has been involved in 23 territorial disputes (Fravel 2008: 2). However, the majority of these disputes have been solved without them escalating to, for example, a military conflict.

Cases of China's territorial disputes that have reached the stage of bloodshed do of course exist. The Sino-Indian War of 1962 brought the Aksai Chin region under Chinese control, which still hampers the development of relations between the two countries, together with another contested region of Arunachal

¹³ This has been particularly true after Foreign Minister Wang Yi (2014) published in December 2014 a review of China's diplomacy titled "2014, 中国特色大国外交风生水起" [The 2014 success of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics]. In this report, China's activities towards peripheral countries were listed first, before other great powers such as United States, Russia and the EU.

¹⁴ 韬光养晦, literally to cover light and nurture in the dark, referring to a policy of concealing one's strength and biding one's time; to keep a low profile. See Deng (1994).

Pradesh, which India controls and China demands. However, in 2013 China and India signed an agreement to lower the tensions along the disputed borders (Panda 2013). The Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979, while started for other reasons, had links to the border disputes between the countries as well, but did not result in border changes. This was also the case with the border skirmishes between China and the Soviet Union on the Ussuri River in 1969. Whereas the border between China and India is still contested, the Sino-Vietnamese land border and the Sino-Soviet (today with Russian Federation) border have been agreed upon.

Ji Pengfei, a professor at Renmin University of China, has divided the development of China's border issues to four distinct phases of which two, namely from the mid-1950s to mid-1960s and from the latter half of the 1980s onwards, count as "peak periods" of border negotiations between China and its neighbouring countries (Ji 2013: 2). As a result, 12 of China's 14 land border disagreements were solved by 2012 (*ibid*). This number includes also China's northern and western borders, where the number of disputes increased in early 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union, as China suddenly had four neighbouring countries where it previously had had only one.

Thus by 2012 China had solved nearly all of its land border disputes and was in the process of agreeing on the ones in Central Asia, as described in more detail in chapter 3.1.1. What remained were the disputes with India, and the maritime territorial disputes on East and South China Seas. While the disputes with India have proven themselves recalcitrant, their situation in the contested areas has remained largely peaceful and the two countries have been able to develop their bilateral relations without letting the disputes disturb these processes too much. The maritime disputes, however, are a completely different matter. As discussed further in chapters 4.1.2 and 5.1.1, the disputes over South China Sea and Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in fact intensified during the new millennium. In 2011 China announced in an official White Paper named "China's Peaceful Development" that territorial integrity and state sovereignty are its "core interests" (China.org.cn 2011). While the White Paper did not mention Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands – or the South China Sea

– directly, by claiming these territorial disputes to be issues of territorial integrity and national sovereignty China has in effect claimed them, too, as its “core interests.”

When discussing state interests, an IR realist easily finds explanations for China’s increasingly assertive policies. Already the increase in the capabilities of the country would dictate such a policy shift: with the capability to act comes the will to act. However, there are clear economic and security interests in the region as well, and a realist explanation, such as the one offered by Eric Hyer (2015), is based on China’s understanding of its strategic environment throughout the People’s Republic of China. According to Hyer, the different policies of China in its territorial disputes, as witnessed in the cases of Central Asia and other land borders versus the maritime disputes of China, can be explained through “Beijing’s larger strategic considerations and grand strategy” (Hyer 2015: 267–268). For example, the contested maritime regions are of great economic value, especially since the acquisition of modern technology that enables fishing and extraction of maritime resources on an unprecedented level (Chung 2012: 3). Additionally, the disputed areas are major trade routes, increasing both their economic as well as geopolitical importance, as the continuous freedom of navigation in the area is of primary importance to many countries in the region.

Freedom of navigation is an issue of national security, too. While ‘innocent passage,’ giving foreign ships the right to pass through a country’s territorial waters allows the free movement of commercial ships, it is more restricting on military vessels. Thus, should the South China Sea fall under Chinese sovereignty, that would hinder the movement of for example U.S. ships of war in the region. Moreover, both East and South China Sea are seen in China as important parts of the ‘First Island Chain’ [*diyi daolian*, 第一岛链], a string of islands either containing or defending China’s coastline, depending on the view of the speaker.

However, there are other possible explanations than the realist one presented above. As Chien-peng Chung (2013: 2–3) has explained, China’s territorial disputes offer an excellent window to the behaviour of the rising China: even to those Chinese thinking in less nationalistic terms the disputed territories have become “iconographic identities” that people use in thinking about the borders of China

(ibid: 2–3).¹⁵ One does not have to go far to look for the origin of such strong sentiments, as for example the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao claimed in September 2012 that the islands disputed with Japan were “China’s sacred and inherent territory” [中国神圣的固有领土] (FMPRC 2012c). Thus, the territories outside Chinese control but considered to be part of China have become even more strongly elements of the Chinese Communist Party’s legitimacy to rule. They are part of the historical narrative of communist China, in which the CCP saved China from foreign imperialism and promised to take back what had been taken from China in the past.

In contrast to such a belligerent rhetoric is the historical understanding of China as a ‘peaceful’ country. As described repeatedly in this study, Chinese leaders have spared no effort in their attempts to convince their audiences of the peaceful nature of China’s rise, often explained as a result of the inherently peaceful nature of the Chinese civilization. This peacefulness is either a “fine tradition of Chinese culture” (China.org.cn 2011) or a result of China’s own experiences as the victim of aggression (Hu 2005b). In either case, the Chinese historical “triumph of civil over military” (*wen*, 文 over *wu*, 武) was not, according to Fairbank (1974: 4), an imagined but an actual part of the social order in ancient China. While the 20th century has proven the ability and willingness of China to wage wars, this view of the peaceful nature of Chinese civilization has not disappeared.

As will be repeated frequently in this work, this study is not about China’s territorial disputes as such. However, in analysing the role change of China in the 2000s, territorial disputes offer an additional framework for analysis, making a comparison between my three cases more structured. Moreover, as the territorial disputes are naturally related to China’s close neighbours, the very same countries towards which China aimed its earlier peripheral diplomacy, the changes in China’s international roles become even better illuminated. In the territorial disputes Chinese foreign relations can be seen in a distilled form. Issues of extremely high relevance to the legitimacy of the ruling Communist Party, to the general popular

¹⁵ For an analysis of the complexities of nationalism in China, see Seo (2005).

opinion in China, and to the continuous economic development and national security, all merge in China's territorial disputes, constituting the "ideational and material components" (Breuning 2011: 26) of China's national role conception. It would also be difficult to find issues that would be more crucial to the legitimacy and position of Chinese leaders, who define the country's national role conceptions (ibid.).¹⁶

1.3. Research Questions, Material, and Methods of This Study

In this dissertation, I aim to test the applicability of role theory in the study of Chinese foreign policy by creating a historical narrative of the process that has led to the construction of China's great power role. Moreover, I will look into the specifics of that role development, as well as into the resulting role of China which is visible, I argue, after 2010. The main research questions in this dissertation can be grouped in two distinct, yet interlinked categories: the first focusing on the shifts that have taken place in Chinese foreign policy, and the second focusing on the development of role theory itself, when applied to the study of the rise of a non-western great power – an unprecedented event in the contemporary international relations.

1. How has China's great power role developed, in particular in its near-abroad in the 2000s?
2. How has China's peripheral diplomacy (especially towards countries and regions it has territorial disputes with) affected China's role change, and (in the spirit of constructivist idea of agency and structure) how has China's role change affected China's behaviour in territorial disputes?
3. How does China's role understanding differ from traditional ideas of a great power?

¹⁶ National role conceptions as well as its components are described in detail in chapter 2.4.2. of this study.

4. What implications does China's non-traditional great power role have to Chinese foreign policy and to its study?

As my initial starting point I see China as a reluctant great power, as I have described above. This has subsequently hindered China's role-taking, and leads to further questions pertaining to role theory itself:

5. What amount of data is enough to make a convincing case for a role change of the magnitude seen in the rise of China?
6. Is there something specific in the study of authoritarian regimes that affects role theory itself?

Research Material

In studying of China – or indeed studying any country with an authoritarian government that limits the freedom of expression to the extent China does – one has to pay attention to the relevance of the sources used in the study of issues such as identity, domestic opinion and so on. In addition, role theory combines both domestic and foreign elements in the study of foreign policy, which creates certain demands for the material chosen for the study.

As my primary research materials I will use the statements and speeches by the top Chinese foreign policy-makers between the 16th and 18th party congresses of the Chinese Communist Party (2002–2012). As the People's Republic of China is a party-state led by the CCP, the party congresses of the CCP have a major influence on all political life in China, including foreign policy. The party congresses, taking place every five years, appoint the leaders of the party, who usually also serve in the top positions in the state sector for two consecutive terms, altogether ten years. These controlled transition processes within the top leadership, effective since the early 1990s, have become the defining events in the continuum of Chinese politics. By giving each leader ten years, and only ten years, to develop Chinese politics within the framework decided by the party, the CCP has created a system which allows a natural focus for the researchers of Chinese politics. One

can either concentrate on a time period influenced by one leader, or on two eras to make comparisons.

Since the late 1970s, when Deng Xiaoping took over the control of the CCP and subsequently much of the Chinese politics, the idea of ‘collective leadership’ [*lingdao jiti*, 领导集体] became an inherent part of the Chinese administration, and especially since the 1990s it has been strongly promoted within the party (Li 2016: 13). This, together with the emphasis on continuity and stability was visible still in the 2000s (Hu 2003).¹⁷ The idea of collective leadership, supported by the supreme leader Deng, was to distribute leadership within the party among several people to avoid the catastrophes of the Maoist era, when the whims of the great helmsman carried millions of people to their premature deaths. Between the 16th and 18th party congresses, this practise was arguably at its strongest, largely due to the unwillingness of Hu Jintao, Chairman of the CCP, to amass to himself more power than he was comfortable with. This has made many analysts both within and outside of China to see him as a weak leader (Jin 2015; Shi 2015).

At the 16th Party Congress in November 2002, the CCP leadership was transferred from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao. Jiang, however, held the important chairmanship of the CCP Central Military Commission until September 2004, which was seen as one of the first signs of the weak position of Hu. As the head of the government of China, the premier, Wen Jiabao, was also officially in charge of the work of the executive branch in general from March 2003 until March 2013. As had been the case during the time of his predecessor, Zhu Rongji, Wen was also in charge of the economic policies of China, which gives particular importance to his statements in relation to Southeast Asia, as discussed in chapter 4.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for executing the actual foreign policies of China, was led by Tang Jiaxuan until March 2003, then by Li Zhaoxing until he was replaced by Yang Jiechi in the 17th CCP Party Congress. Yang took over the post of Foreign Minister in April 2007 and kept it until March 2013. Both Tang and Li held afterwards the influential positions of State Councillor,

¹⁷ While the Chinese leadership under Xi Jinping has been seen as less collective in nature, Cheng Li (2016: esp. 15–26) argues that Xi’s personal power is still limited.

and especially Tang Jiaxuan became the spokesman of Chinese foreign policy issues related to Japan, as discussed in chapter 5.

The speeches and statements of these five CCP leaders – Chairman-President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao and Foreign Ministers Tang Jiaxuan, Li Zhaoxing and Yang Jiechi (Tang also in the capacity of State Councillor) – form the lion's share of my research material. As I will suggest in my case studies, there seems to have been a clear division of labour between the top two of this group: while Hu Jintao was the most active speaker on events and issues related to Central Asia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), there were hardly any speeches from him in the context of Japan. Wen Jiabao, the most active speaker of all five, was charged with relations with Southeast Asia, especially in the context of cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The framework of cooperation between China and the ASEAN, as well as between China and the SCO, make it possible to follow the development of Chinese policies towards these regions. Summits of both organisations were regularly attended by Hu and Wen, and nearly all of their speeches and statements on these occasions are available.

Japan, which according to my research has caused more problems for Chinese foreign policy roles than the other two cases, is most problematic for myself, too, as there are very few relevant speeches from the top two decision-makers during the time frame of my research, 2002–2012. Luckily, Tang Jiaxuan steps up during those years as the 'Japan-hand' of Chinese leadership, and fills this void very well indeed. The remaining two, Li Zhaoxing and Yang Jiechi have less fixed roles, and their speeches, fewer in number, can be found in all three contexts. On top of his speeches, Tang Jiaxuan published his memoirs 劲雨煦风 (*Jing Yu Xu Feng*, Eng. *Heavy Storm & Gentle Breeze*) in 2009, which is also included in the materials for this dissertation.

As an additional note on the power relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the executive branch of the Chinese government, the position of the individual within the party hierarchy and the role of the Leading Small Groups should be discussed. Firstly, while Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, Tang Jiaxuan

and Li Zhaoxing were all members of the 16th Central Committee (CC) of the CCP, officially the top decision-making organ of the party with 200-odd members, neither Tang nor Li made it to the Politburo (Political Bureau) of the Central Committee, the secretive power base of the party consisting of 20–30 party leaders. Naturally, they had no place in the Standing Committee of the Politburo either, in which 5–9 men rule the Chinese Communist Party and thus Chinese state, too. The same applies to the next Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi, who had to settle for membership of the Central Committee only: Chinese Foreign Ministers, it seems, belong to top 200 only, not the top 20 leaders in China (Saich 2015: 85–153).

To solve problems arising from the dual structure of governance between the party and the state, the CCP has created Leading Small Groups (*lingdao xiaozu*, LSG, 领导小组), usually including a member of the Politburo Standing Committee as chairman and head of the executive branch in question, as well as some other high-ranking members of the CCP. These LSGs have an important task of channelling information and orders between the party and the state as well as acting as a coordinating body of each executive branch. Thus, before the leadership of Hu Jintao, the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (*zhongyang waishi gongzuo lingdao xiaozu*, FALSG, 中央外事工作领导小组) was headed by Jiang Zemin, with Zhu Rongji (Premier) and Qian Qichen (State Councillor, former Foreign Minister) as deputy chairs and Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, together with a few others, as members (Kim 2015: 126–127).

While there is no official information on the composition of the FALSG under Hu Jintao, it is safe to assume that in addition to himself, it would have included at least the former and incumbent Foreign Ministers, Tang Jiaxuan, Li Zhaoxian and Yang Jiechi, as well as other high-ranking party members dealing with foreign affairs at least for some time. According to Alice L. Miller (2008: 10), the CCP FALSG after 17th Party Congress would have included also the future head of the CCP Xi Jinping as a deputy chairman and Dai Bingguo (also a State Councillor between 2008 and 2013) as its Secretary-General.¹⁸ Thus, when

¹⁸ Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox (2010: 5) include also Ministers of Commerce, Defence and State Security in Hu Jintao's FALSG.

considered relevant, speeches by these persons have also been included among the material for this work, as well as some remarks from the Foreign Ministry spokespersons and ambassadors and vice-premiers, although these to a lesser degree, as they tend to be mouthpieces for decisions made by others. This kind of approach to the research materials was used by the founder of role theory in the study of foreign policy, Kalevi Holsti (1970: 256), stressing the importance of the “highest-level policymakers.” However, where Holsti suggests that a representative sample of “at minimum of ten sources,” is sufficient, I find that more extensive source material is needed for a reliable view.

In total, the number of speeches collected for this study comes up to almost one hundred. Not all of them are referred to directly, of course, but the speeches of the five most relevant decision-makers, over 50 in number, are all among the material analysed: Hu Jintao’s speeches at the summits of the SCO (10) as well as during his official visit to Japan in 2008 (2), Wen Jiabao’s speeches at the ASEAN+3 and the China-ASEAN summits (19, including two official statements from the Foreign Ministry) and a few others related to Japan and Central Asia. Tang Jiaxuan’s speeches related to Japan (14), especially in the context of China-Japan Friendship Association as well as speeches of Li Zhaoxian and Yang Jiechi, come to over a dozen.¹⁹ While I am not doing a quantitative analysis or aiming for a perfect sample, I consider it extremely important to gather enough material in order to be able to come up with a justified and credible result in my attempt to construct China’s foreign policy roles.

By using this kind of approach to my materials I have also aimed to assess the “evidentiary value of archival materials,” a necessity, according to George and Bennet (2005: 99–100), for anyone doing historical case studies. Moreover, I have followed the advice of the same duo in trying to avoid political bias, keeping in mind the context of these speeches and trying to create for myself a hypothesis, the

¹⁹ Most of these speeches are available online, which has also created problems: for example, the Chinese Foreign Ministry frequently changes the location of their documents online, making it difficult to find them afterwards. In the bibliography, I have included the latest (December 2016) internet address of each speech or document.

set of assumptions described earlier in this chapter, in order to be able to stay focused.

In my work, the purpose of this material is to shed light on the ego side of the national role conceptions of China, to show how the top decision-makers of Chinese foreign policy perceive the ideational and material aspects that are the main building blocks of a country's national role conception (see chapter 2.4). In the centrally controlled political system of China, known as democratic centralism, the statements of the decision-makers carry an even stronger message than in liberal democracies. Chinese leaders, in general, do not improvise when talking in public.²⁰

For the purpose of strengthening the argument related to the national role conceptions, and especially the perceived alter exceptions towards them, I have chosen for further analysis two academic journals in China, 国际问题研究 (*China International Studies*), published by the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), and 现代国际关系 (*Contemporary International Relations*), published by the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). Among the wide variety of relevant institutes in China, these two are widely considered the two most policy-relevant foreign policy think tanks, with strong linkages to the central government, the Foreign Ministry, and the Ministry of State Security (Shambaugh 2002; Abb 2013: 23). During my time frame, over 300 journal articles dealing with my three cases were published in these two journals, by dozens of different authors. Of these authors I have selected the most active ones, 16 in number, who share among them 39 single-authored and nine co-authored articles. These are all included in this study.

²⁰ Democratic centralism refers to the Leninist tradition of governance, where, while being able to raise their opinion during the decision-making process, the participants of the process must acquiesce to the decision after it has been reached. Theoretically this should prevent, among other things, intra- and inter-role conflicts arising from the individual interpretations of the decision-makers, as described by Sebastian Harnisch (2012: 51), and even role contestation, as described by Cristian Cantir and Juliet Kaarbo (2016). However, in practise this seems not to be the case (see e.g. chapter 5 of this study). By acknowledging democratic centralism I by no means try to present China as a unitary actor: there are several cleavages in the Chinese society, both between the CCP and the people, as well as within the party itself. However, when it comes to foreign policy, the messages from the Chinese political elite are remarkably uniform when compared to liberal democracies.

The main contribution of these articles is to provide information on the alter expectations towards China's foreign policy roles in the three cases I have chosen. Naturally, this kind of information is very rare in the speeches of the policymakers themselves, but the Chinese research community, in their analysis on the country's foreign policy, keeps a close eye on the intentions and wishes of the neighbouring nations. Articles such these are exceptionally useful, as they include more nuanced and analytical views on China's foreign policy than the speeches of decision-makers, which, while more influential, are often more concise and simplifying. Additionally, in order to paint a clearer picture of the expectations of the other countries, some further secondary material is also used.

Lastly, I have conducted some interviews with researchers of international relations in Greater China. My intention has not been to base my argument on these interviews, and mostly they have been useful when I was still framing my research questions. However, these interviews, around 10 in number and conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and in Taipei between 2011 and 2015, have occasionally provided insights to some specific questions as well, and are thus used when considered relevant. Still, I wish to emphasise that this research is primarily based on speeches and articles in the written format.

To sum up, I have collected three kinds of material to serve three different, while occasionally overlapping purposes: the speeches of the Chinese decision-makers are used to construct both the ideational and material aspects of the ego side of the national role concepts of each my case. The Chinese academic articles, together with secondary sources of international origin, are used to explain the perceived alter expectations towards China's national role concepts. The interviews, conducted among Chinese-speaking academics in East Asia, are of an auxiliary nature, used to clarify issues and strengthen argument or, if necessary, to raise further questions.

Of my primary material, the vast majority is in Chinese and not available in English or other languages. Some of the speeches have been translated into English, but those are few in number and occasionally they differ in content from the originals. The translations in the text, unless otherwise stated, are my own. The

same applies to the academic articles, even though both *China International Studies* and *Contemporary International Relations* occasionally publishes selected articles in English. The interviews have been conducted both in Chinese and in English.

Methods Used in This Study

My primary method is a qualitative analysis of my three cases on the basis of the above-mentioned sources. More specifically, I will apply three different, while to certain degree overlapping, approaches at the same time: process-tracing, theory-testing and the creation of a historical narrative. According to the well-known social science methodologists Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, process-tracing and historical explanation “share some basic features” and process-tracing “is an indispensable tool for theory testing and development” (George and Bennett 2005: 207–208). Thus, I will combine the methods of process-tracing and historical explanation to find out whether the framework of role theory, especially in my slightly modified version, is useful to this kind of study.

In practice, my method comes close to structured, focused comparison in the sense described by George and Bennett (ibid: 67): my research is structured in the sense that my research questions “reflect the research objective” and these questions “are asked of each case under study to guide and standardise data collection, thereby making a systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible.” While there is slight variation in my materials (as described above) I believe that my data collection has been standardised well enough by focusing on the top decision-makers in specific contexts.

By focusing on the construction of national role conceptions, with emphasis on its ego side and ideological aspects, I have narrowed down my focus so that meaningful comparison between my cases is possible (see George and Bennett 2005: 67). Moreover, as the time frame of my research is strictly defined, I see my work to represent the structured, focused comparison very well. However, it is possible that the causality processes that I will describe in this work are such that wider generalisations to other societies, political situations and time frames might not be possible. This is something that the students of China have grown accustomed to,

and it is commonly accepted that sometimes China needs to be studied *sui generis*, without further generalisations. However, at the end of this dissertation I will aim to provide some wider explanations as well.

Of the different approaches of process-tracing, I have decided to use analytical explanation, which “converts a historical narrative into an *analytical* explanation couched in explicit theoretical forms” (George and Bennett 2005: 210–212, italics in the original). Thus, I am not merely creating a detailed narrative with a possible causal explanation, but also tie that narrative into an existing theoretical framework, role theory. This gives my research additional theoretical value, while combining that theoretical approach with a robust empiricism. Research conducted in this manner serves multiple purposes, as it can be read not only as a causal explanation or a narrative of “this is what happened in China’s foreign policy,” but also as a theoretical undertaking.

Thus I have organised the three cases in a roughly chronological order to illuminate the development of China’s great power role and its consequences to Chinese foreign policy. By integrating role theory in each of these cases it is also possible to analyse the applicability of the theory while hopefully still making the text informative for a reader interested in only the historical narrative.

How, then, do my selected methods work with constructivist role theory? Process-tracing and historical narratives aim to show how policies are made, that is, how they are constructed over time according to interests, values, and norms that are also constructed over time. This is a constructivist view, and the analysis of the construction of national role conceptions as well as the identification of the foreign policy emanating from them combines role theory, constructivism and process-tracing as well as historical explanation. Moreover, should this research bear meaningful results, the applicability of role theory to such research would get further confirmation.

2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS, AND ROLE THEORY

The main purpose of this chapter is to explain the theoretical framework used in this study. In order to do that, I will start with an overview of the general development of the study of international relations. Traveling through most of the 20th century, I will start with the traditional theories that underline rational choice, arriving to reflectivist theories opposing the same concept. I will finish the first part of this chapter with constructivism, which will be discussed in more detail: The relevance of constructivism in the study of China gets special attention, as I will argue that constructivism offers the most natural approach for those whose interest in the Chinese foreign policy stem from China *per se*, not from the international system, as is the case in this research.

The second part of this chapter is devoted to foreign policy analysis (FPA). A subfield of political science and closely related to international relations, FPA is usually country-specific and has thus a lot to gain from constructivism. I argue that constructivist foreign policy analysis offers the most useful theoretical, ontological and epistemological tools for the study of Chinese foreign policy. While the relationship between international relations and FPA is close, there are notable differences as well, and this study, with its focus on the foreign policy behaviour of China and the domestic origins of that behaviour, falls more on the side of foreign policy analysis. Some other studies that are more interested in e.g. China's growing influence on the international system would be considered to belong to international relations. The line between the two, however, is sometimes vague, and drawing strong distinctions would not serve the purpose of this study either.

In the third part of this chapter I will discuss in detail one specific theory used in both international relations and foreign policy analysis, with strong links to constructivism: role theory. The reasoning behind the use of role theory as well as its relevance to the study of China's peripheral foreign policy, especially related to the early 21st century territorial disputes, gets special attention, as do the building blocks of national role conceptions, which form the core concepts of this study. I

will also offer some further contribution to role theory itself: role theory is closely connected to the still ongoing structure-agency problem of international relations and foreign policy analysis, and in this particular debate I will take a stance leaning slightly more towards the agency side of it.

2.1. Origins of IR: Liberalism and Realism

Like so many other areas of research, the study of international relations (IR)²¹ has a history of more or less constant debate between different factions within the discipline. Throughout the existence of the modern IR research, the theoretically inclined scholars of international relations have engaged in major disputes about the nature of their field of research. In fact, sometimes the history of IR is seen as a narrative of these great disputes, which seem to follow each other at regular intervals. These disputes, sometimes called ‘great debates’, have concentrated either on the nature of the international system, on the proper focus of the research, or on the validity of the methods used in that research.

While this dissertation does not engage itself with these debates, I have decided to frame this part of the study according to their underlying dynamics. This approach offers a fairly clear, if somewhat simplified way to explain the general development within the study of international relations and foreign policy analysis, a background that is necessary here, since the study of Chinese foreign policy has followed more or less the same course. As a relatively new discipline of social sciences, the study international relations has its origin in the First World War. The unprecedented extent of and devastation caused by the war gave reason to think that there was something wrong with the international system itself. This led, especially in the English speaking world, to the rise of liberal institutionalism, the idea of managing the world through liberal political principles (Brown and Alley 2005: 20). The purpose of the liberal institutionalism was (and still is) is to promote peace. It saw wars as actions of militaristic and undemocratic governments, and in the eyes

²¹ With the abbreviation IR I refer to the study of international relations as opposed to the ‘actual’ relations between states on the international arena.

of liberal institutionalism, also called simply as liberalism, wars could be prevented through democracy and free trade (Burchill 2005: 58–59).

It is important to note how since the very beginning, IR strived towards the *useful*. It had its origin as a scientific discipline in the post-World War I world that had just experienced its most destructive military conflict so far, and it was strongly felt among both the politicians and scholars that any future conflicts on that scale had to be prevented. In fact, liberal scholars of IR see in a Kantian fashion peace as the normal state of affairs that could and should last continuously.

Unfortunately, this first major task of IR was a failure, and the world soon faced an even more devastating war that led to the death of even more people, as well as the standoff between major powers known as the Cold War. This led to the prominence of realism, arguably *the* theory of international relations that seemed to answer to the questions posed by both academics and foreign policy makers alike.

As in the case of liberalism, realism gained prominence in the aftermath of a great war. For realists, the Second World War had showed that the international system is anarchic, and the only thing that secured the position and survival of a state was power. Realism, with its pessimistic view on human nature and on international cooperation, had already been the theory of choice for many politicians and diplomats, and now became the one for most IR scholars, too. Many people came to the conclusion that the anarchic nature of the international system means that states had no friends, only interests (Dunne and Schmidt 2008: 92).

Similarly to the overall development of the field, the study of China in the international system and of Chinese foreign policy followed for a long time mostly realist tradition. The tradition has continued to the 21st century, as the issue of a rising power is a recurring concept in realist thinking, usually offering clear if pessimistic views of such occasions. In fact, one theme of this study is to show how the Chinese leadership has been making efforts in order to alleviate realist concerns related to the rise of China.

The way realism gained prominence in the study of international relations has often been named the first ‘great debate’ of IR.²² Aside the obvious failure of liberalism to preserve the peace, there were other problems in it that the realists were keen to remedy. The main issue was the optimistic starting point of liberal institutionalism. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, the main proponent of post-WWII realism, the reason for the aggressive nature of states was a result of the aggressiveness in human nature, and therefore it could not be remedied (Morgenthau 1946). Thus, the idealistic approach of liberalism was wrong, as had been proven by the two World Wars. Moreover, the decades long Cold War seemed to give further confirmation to the realist paradigm.

In fact, realism has held its position as the main theoretical approach of international relations research all along. The major reason for this lies in its pessimistic starting point: by following the realist approach, policymakers are rarely disappointed. This has made realism, as already mentioned, the main thinking tool for politicians who need to choose how to run a country in a successful manner and, above else, safeguard the survival of the state. The idiom ‘it’s a jungle out there’ catches the essence of realism in IR better than well, and the so-called idealists within international relations have had to get used to disappointment time and time again.

Methodologically, both realism and liberalism favour the idea of rational choice or the rational actor. This approach assumes that decision makers choose the best course of action based on all the available data through careful cost-benefit analysis. While this approach was discredited already decades ago, its simplicity attracts many who would otherwise have difficulties in obtaining reliable data for their research. This applies to the study of China, too, as it has often been difficult to ‘see’ into China. Thus, many scholars of China have been satisfied to combine their realist or liberal framework with the idea of a rational state actor, without attempting to go deeper into Chinese society in their work.

²² The nature of these debates is also a matter of debates of their own, as exemplified by Schmidt (2012), who also argues that the term “idealist” was imposed unfairly to liberals by the proponents of realist paradigm.

Even the main domestic attempt to think ‘outside the box,’ known as Chinese IR theory and promoted by many Chinese scholars, seems to have been unable to escape the realism-liberalism dichotomy. The Chinese IR theory is still a largely underdeveloped field with very little to offer as a ‘theory’ that is, in helping to create abstractions. As a relative newcomer to international scholarship of international relations, Chinese IR scholarship has seemingly been taking the side of liberalists: in fact, it can be argued that the main need for the so-called Chinese IR theory has been to show how China can rise to a status of a great power without challenging the current, American hegemony. However, the tendency of taking a strong policy-relevant starting point to the study of China’s foreign policy has in fact been seen as the weakness in IR in China already for a long time, on top of some methodological problems (Song 2001).

However, it is important to note that the rise of realism did not mean the end of liberalism, and prominence of realism did not mean that the study of international relations would have been without further debates. As a much-discussed example of liberalism, the European Union (EU) with all its problems is still up and running, albeit with a limp caused by the worldwide financial crisis and the internal problems of the EU. Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the non-violent end of the Cold War has been a tough nut to realism to explain.

On the other hand, while many external actors have already a long time ago learned the difference between the EU and its member states, and the national interest has experienced renewed attention even within the most successful attempt of regional integration in the world, international cooperation is all but dead. As neither of these theoretical frameworks seemed able to explain the developments in the world, it became obvious that both liberalism and realism needed to be upgraded to a more contemporary version.

2.1.1. Neorealism, Neoliberalism and the Proliferation of IR

By the mid-1980s, classical versions of realism and liberalism had already been pushed aside by their updated versions, neorealism and neoliberalism. Neorealism (or structural realism) became an integral part of IR through the emphasis given to it by Kenneth Waltz's 1979 book *Theory of International Politics*. In the terms of neorealism, the realm of international relations is in fact a zero-sum game where for sovereign states, the primary units of action, it is most important to keep up with the material capabilities of the other states. According to Waltz, "international structures are defined in terms of the primary political units of an era" and the structures "emerge from the coexistence of states" (Waltz 1979/2010: 91). More precisely, it is the "distribution of capabilities across units" that defines these structures (ibid: 101). This distribution of capabilities is at the heart of also Waltz's earlier thinking, according to which "relative gains are more important than absolute gains" (Waltz 1959: 198).

Neoliberalism, on the other hand, is a direct response to neorealism. In his 1984 book *After Hegemony*, Robert Keohane "builds deliberately and explicitly" on Kenneth Waltz's idea of neorealism (Keohane 1984/2005: x), but according to him international cooperation is possible even with the decline of a hegemonic power, a situation deemed by neorealists to result in anarchy. According to Keohane, post-WWII international institutions such as 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), post-Cold War EU, and NATO are examples of states behaving in self-interested manner, but building "international regimes in order to promote mutually beneficial cooperation" (ibid: xi). Thus, the main difference between neorealism and neoliberalism has often been stated as the one focusing on relative gains and the other on absolute gains.

After the early years of international relations as a discipline, dominated by liberalism and realism, other theories of IR have flourished, too. Drawing from the ideas of philosophers influenced by the Enlightenment, such as Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel as well as Karl Marx, critical theory gained ground in the 1960s. The main contribution of critical theory is in its aim to actively develop the world towards the better, as explained by members of Frankfurt school, the most

important origin of the 20th-century critical theorists (Devetak 2005: 137–138). In the context of this work the main importance of critical theory arises from the proposed connection with it and constructivism, as will be described later.

Some, such as the English school promoted by Martin Wight and Hedley Bull, have tried to bring together aspects of the two original approaches of IR. The English school, or liberal realism, can be seen as a variety of realism: while it acknowledges the anarchical nature of the world, it also recognises and emphasises the role of the society of states. The English school also shares much with the later approach of constructivism in its interest in abstractions such as international society, rather than in the material capabilities that are the focus of the more positivist approaches of liberalism and realism (Linklater 2005: esp. 108–109).

During this proliferation of IR, the second ‘great debate’ took place. This debate was not about the ontologies of the international system, human nature, and the state. This time the disagreement was of an epistemological nature and concerned itself with the methodological approach of the research itself. A behavioural approach challenged the old, ‘traditionalist’ means of research with its ‘scientific’ approach, and brought the social sciences closer to the natural sciences by claiming that political science in general, as well as study of international relations as a sub-field of it, could be conducted in an objective manner (Hollis and Smith 1992: 28–32).

This positivist turn of IR brought new, quantitative research methods to the core of the study. However, as positivist empiricism – e.g. in the form of large-sample interviews or statistical analysis – was impossible to conduct in the largely inaccessible People’s Republic of China, the western study of Chinese foreign policy did not usually adopt it as a method. Even today, when foreign researchers have much better access to China, unreliable statistics and difficulties in sampling usually keep strictly quantitative China scholars at bay.²³

The modern and contemporary study of Chinese foreign policy has been divided mostly between neorealists and neoliberalists (or liberal institutionalists).

²³ Obviously, small sample sizes do not prevent quantitative research *per se*, but merely limit the research questions to those that can be answered with the data available.

Subsequently, the contemporary views on the rise of China have been divided. Perhaps the most well-known proponent of offensive (neo)realism, John Mearsheimer, has already for some time been predicting the coming conflict between China and the United States, the current 'hegemon'. The reason for this is simply the growing power of China, which will in Mearsheimer's (2010) opinion inevitably challenge the geopolitical supremacy of the U.S. in Asia in accordance with the so-called Thucydides Trap that sees a conflict between a rising power and a current hegemon as inevitable (Allison 2015).

While Mearsheimer doubts the role of economic interdependence in geopolitics (2010: 393), it is precisely the argument the liberalists use to explain why the coming conflict between China and the U.S. is unlikely, or even impossible. For example, Alastair Ian Johnston has argued that China has in fact become more 'socialized' to the international system and that – despite the claims of the realists – *realpolitik* "preferences and practices" are not an inevitable "function of material structural conditions" (Johnston 2008: 198). Naturally, some scholars see China's interest in international institutions as dictated by its desire to increase its power, and not just as a symptom of its acquiesce to international norms (Lanteigne 2007).

In any case, while the relationship between China and other powers indeed can, in the liberalist vein, be sometimes seen in terms of complex interdependence, there are other, better equipped approaches to international politics that could be adopted by the scholars of China. However, the original questions about the motives of rising China and the consequences of that rise are nearly always present when Chinese foreign policy is being discussed, and that is the case with this study as well.

A more recent approach of neoclassical realism has attempted to combine the analysis of the international and domestic spheres to the realist framework, and has been used in the study of China as well (see e.g. Sørensen 2013). While neoclassical realism has seemingly been able to remedy many of the problems in the earlier realist approaches, it has been criticised of abandoning realism to explain "anomalies" (Legro and Moravcsik 1999: 6). However, criticising a research framework for trying to gain more explanatory power seems overtly dogmatic.

What neoclassical realism does, and what reaffirms its 'realist' nature, is its focus on power. Even so, it still forgets, for example, the impact of ideas in decision-making, a phenomenon that started to receive attention in the late 1980s (see e.g. Goldstein and Keohane 1988).

In fact, apart from offering international relations an alternative to neorealism, Robert Keohane is often seen as the person who initiated another split within the discipline of IR. This initiative took a step away from neoliberalism as well, but instead of doing that on the level of ontology, Keohane made would an epistemological leap that became known as reflectivism. This division is known as the third 'great debate' in the study of international relations.

2.2. Reflectivism

The third major debate inside the international relations took place from the late 1980s onwards. The earlier rise of behaviourism had elevated the positivist research tradition that had then remained as the main strand of IR due to its 'scientific' approach to social phenomena. However, towards the end of the Cold War the international realm had become increasingly complicated and seemingly impossible to explain with the old theories.

As an umbrella term for many different theories, reflectivism includes several branches of thinking on international relations that all reject the notion of rational choice. As rational choice is the basis of most positivist approaches of IR such as (neo) liberalism and (neo) realism which both attempted to bring the empiricism of the natural sciences to the study of social behaviour, reflective approaches are also known as post-positivist theories.

Basing his argument on the study of international institutions, Keohane (1988) compared two approaches that he called the rationalistic and the reflective. Rationalistic theories, Keohane argued, "do not enable us to understand how interests change as a result of changes in belief systems" (ibid: 391). Reflectivist theories, emphasizing learning and language, do focus on these changes, but *both* the rationalistic *and* the reflective theories described by Keohane shared one weakness: they did not pay enough attention to domestic politics (ibid: 392). This

shortcoming is not the only one in the original reflectivist theories (see Keohane 1988: 393), but in the context of my research it has particularly far-reaching implications. As I see myself first and foremost a scholar of China, I have always considered the domestic origins of foreign policy to have more explanatory power than international, structural influence alone can have. A similar focus on the relevance of the domestic can be seen in some of the offspring of reflectivism, such as in constructivism, the approach chosen for this study.

2.2.1. Constructivism

Constructivism, which in its original form shared the aims and many of the quantitative methods of positivist empiricism, has grown to encompass several different kinds of approaches to the study of the social world, and today often includes strong post-positivist tendencies. This makes it especially well-suited to the study of the domestic origins of foreign policy. As I will explain in the following, this has had far-reaching implications for the study of China.

Just like reflectivism in general, constructivism is often seen as a more general term for different approaches to social inquiry than merely as a theory of international relations. According to some scholars, constructivism's roots can be found in critical theory, while others reject this notion, basing their opinion on constructivism's emphasis on empirical analysis (Reus-Smit 2005: 195). In this sense, the early constructivists agreed with the positivist epistemology of rationalists such as realists and liberalists, while at the same time disagreeing with their ontology and with the concept of rational choice.

Realists of IR see the anarchic nature of the international system as given. According to Alexander Wendt (1992), "anarchy is what states make of it." With this notion he rejected the realists' idea of the anarchical international system, and instead explained anarchy as the outcome of states' behaviour and not a rule of nature. The difference is the one between "a brute fact" and "a social fact," where the former exists independent of observers and the latter is socially constructed among the actors (Brown and Ainley 2009: 48–49).

Apart from its ontological divergence from the earlier research traditions, constructivism is sometimes seen to occupy a different, “middle ground” in the epistemological sense as well (Adler 1997). Thus, for most of those willing to reject the notion of a rational actor, it encompasses a multitude of different variations of thinking. While it is sometimes difficult to name more than one or two issues shared by all constructivists, at least some generalisations can be made. Constructivists are mainly known for their emphasis on normative and ideational structures together with material structures, on how these non-material structures “condition actors’ identities” and how “agents and structures are mutually constituted” (Reus-Smit 2005: 196–197).

In any case, due to the different approaches all called constructivist, it has become extremely important for any scholar of international relations calling him/herself a constructivist to explain in detail what kind of research he or she is actually doing. In this study, this explanation is offered in the following chapters discussing foreign policy analysis and role theory. At this point it is sufficient to state that all three assumptions described in the previous paragraph are in the very centre of my research, and that while I agree with the notion of a reality that exists independently of us, I also understand it while explaining it my message is conveyed through language and often interpreted differently from my original meaning.

Until recently, there has been a severe lack of constructivist research on Chinese foreign policy. Domestic determinants of China’s international behaviour, an emphasis on domestic agency instead of international structure, and a focus on individuals instead of the collective have been almost impossible to find in the scholarship on China. As a consequence, the question of how the rise of China will impact the rest of the world, which is the major topic of 21st-century IR, seems still to be largely divided between the realist view of seeing a future military conflict as almost inevitable, and the liberal view, which claims that economic interdependence will prevent war(s) (see Mearsheimer 2010 and Johnston 2008, discussed above).

It is no big surprise that the major attempts to remedy this specific lack in China-related IR research has been coming from China studies: with its emphasis on history, culture and language, China studies, combined with the constructivist theoretical and methodological frameworks, takes issues such as domestic politics, agency and the role of the individual as natural *foci* for the study. Good examples of post-positivist, or constructivist, studies on Chinese foreign policy include, for example, a PhD dissertation by Linsay Cunningham-Cross (2014), applying critical theory and post-colonialism to the study of Chinese international relations scholarship, and William Callahan's (2015) criticism of the positivist approach to Chinese soft power.²⁴ Both Callahan and Cunningham-Cross emphasise their expertise as scholars of China, and I would be happy to see this work to continue that tradition.

If we see norms and ideas as historically and socially constructed social practices, China's open emphasis on its unique historical experiences is a great example. This is clearly visible also in Feng Zhang's (2015) work on Confucianism in Chinese foreign policy traditions, and Jyrki Kallio's (2016) PhD on Chinese strategic narratives. In fact, while this study deals more with China's contemporary than with its historical roles, it has been a long-standing practice of the Communist Party of China to create historical narratives supporting and legitimizing its rule (see e.g. Lary 2008). As will be discussed in this study, the consequences of this practice are clearly visible in the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China even today.

In my opinion, China is an object of research which usefully brings to light the problems of the traditional approaches of IR that focus on rational choice and aim for grand theories. China, even while it increasingly tries to behave like a nation-state, is not one.²⁵ It is a whole civilization with a history, cultural developments and identity markedly different from Western Europe and North

²⁴ Also works such as Carlson (2011) and Rozman (2013) are clearly constructivist studies of Chinese foreign policy, discussing e.g. the impact of identity on Chinese foreign policy.

²⁵ According to the Constitution of the country, China is a "unitary multi-ethnic state" [统一的多民族国家] (PRC 1999: 6 and 83)

America – the areas that have formed the original context for IR as a field of study. Thus, in order to understand Chinese foreign policy, we need to study China from the inside, as well as adjust the theoretical frameworks of IR so that they can take into account the domestic aspects of Chinese foreign policy. Such a project calls for an approach specifically geared to explain the relationship between the domestic and the foreign, as well as the underlying logic behind the foreign policy of a country. This approach is called foreign policy analysis.

2.3. Foreign Policy Analysis

While the term Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) itself is quite self-explanatory, it is sometimes important to determine what exactly separates FPA from the study of international relations. In general it can be said that as a more specific field of study, FPA aims to explain state behaviour in greater detail than traditional IR scholarship. In doing this, FPA is especially interested in foreign policy decision-making that, according to the pioneers of FPA, is the key to the most interesting of all questions: why something happens. In the words of Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, “we would go so far as to say that the *’why’ questions cannot be answered without analysis of decision-making*” (1962/2002: 35, italics in the original).

Furthermore, foreign policy analysis has an inherent opposition to the simplistic ‘billiard-ball’ approach to decision-making, the roots of which are in the theory of rational choice. The alternative view can be derived from the understanding that while the models using the concept of rational actor make the work of theorizing international relations much easier, in these models “the actor is not only predicated as acting rationally but also as having complete information” (ibid: 110). Such omniscience, as should be clear to anybody paying more than fleeting moment of attention to the complexity of the realm of international politics, is just not possible. Therefore, it must be accepted that the decision makers, in their attempt to make the best decisions possible time after time, have only a limited amount of data at their disposal in this process. Moreover, this data comes from various sources that often have their own reasons and purposes when offering up the information. Often this results in a diverse range of institutional pushing and

pulling in foreign policy decision-making, as described by Graham Allison in the 1960s in his three models of decision-making, especially in the bureaucratic politics model (Allison and Zelikow 1999).

As FPA is a field of study closely interlinked with general IR, the debates in the study of international relations have impacted foreign policy analysis as well. Among the multitude of debates one or two are of especial interest for this study, and will be discussed in more detail. One debate of special importance discusses the origin of foreign policy behaviour: Are the actions of a state determined by the international structure constraining and/or enabling them or, as has been later argued, are the domestic developments within the country in question more important? This question of the correct level of analysis within IR is known as the structure-agency problem.

It is clear that when one looks at works of area studies, such as this one, their approaches to the study of international politics is usually more closely connected to FPA than to traditional IR. With in-depth analysis of the domestic determinants of foreign policy, often with multidisciplinary means, it is natural that specialists of certain area feel the more general IR to be too detached and theoretical, as well as lacking in empiricism. But while area studies and FPA can contribute to IR, the latter, too, can help to frame issues and questions relevant to the two former fields. Moreover, after the introduction of constructivist IR, the previously clear divisions between IR, FPA and area studies have become less obvious. A good example of this is the somewhat less commonplace argument dealing with the dichotomy between the underlying factors in the decision-making: Is decision-making influenced more by ideological assumptions of a decision-maker, or by material opportunities and restraints of a state? These two questions, the correct level of analysis as well as the ideational-material division, are central to both constructivist international relations and foreign policy analysis, and are discussed next.

2.3.1. Structure-Agency and Ideational-Material Divisions in Foreign Policy Analysis

While the study of international relations in its early phase tended to be more focused on the state as an actor or agent, this changed largely due to Kenneth Waltz's *Man, the State and War* (1959), in which Waltz emphasised the nature of the international system as the main explanation for war (Brown and Ainley 2009: 66). After this the study of international relations mainly focused on the international system, or structure. In its simplest form the behaviour of states was seen as a game of billiards: a ball hitting another from a certain direction with certain speed would result in a situation that could be predicted with great accuracy. While the external influence could vary, the actions of a state under that influence could be predicted in an almost mathematical fashion. No particular interest was paid to the internal conditions of the principal agent of international relations: the state.

Waltz continued to support the structural explanations of international relations in his immensely influential book *Theory of International Politics* (1979). In this book Waltz attempts to create a theory that would remedy "the defects of present theories" (Waltz 1979: 1). The attempt to create a 'meta-theory' that would explain everything is at the bottom of Waltz's preference of structure over agency: it would be impossible create a theory that would at the same time explain the whole system of international politics, and push the researcher to get well acquainted with the local conditions of each state. To emphasize the generality of his approach, Waltz also makes a clear distinction between international politics and foreign policy, and the study of those two. According to him (1979: 122), researchers such as Morgenthau and Graham Allison "have confused and merged two quite different matters."²⁶

However, the separation of the study of international relations (or international politics, in Waltz's terms) and foreign policy is vague at best, and the

²⁶ Graham Allison's *Essence of Decision* (1971/1999), introducing the Bureaucratic Politics Model of foreign policy decision-making, is widely considered as one of the best attempts to look into the domestic determinants of foreign policy behaviour.

debate between agency-oriented researchers and those supporting structural approach did not end with *Theory of International Politics*. In 1987 Alexander Wendt addressed this problem and brought the issue of an agency back to the heart of IR. Wendt (1987: 340) criticised the two then dominant theories of IR, neorealism and world-systems theory,²⁷ for focusing on the structure at the expense of agency which, according to him, “undermines the theories’ explanation of state action in the international system.” In a sharp contrast with these theories, and very much in line with his own constructivist thinking described above, Wendt claimed that agent and structure were instead “co-determined” and “mutually constituted” (Wendt 1987: 339).

Wendt (ibid.) named his alternative to neorealism and world-systems theory (which he called the individualist and structuralist theories, respectively) as structuration theory. In order to explain state action the theories of international relations should address both agents (state) and structure (international system) (ibid: 365). While Wendt by no means advocated the supremacy of agent over structure, many people, especially within the foreign policy analysis, have since felt it necessary to look more closely than before at the domestic determinants of foreign policy.

This dissertation follows the same path. Partly due to the chosen theoretical approach and partly due to the country-specific focus of my research, I believe it crucial to look into those determinants of China’s foreign policy that have their origin within China. As I will explain in the following chapter, this does not mean that I reject the structural influence completely. On the contrary, role theory, to which I turn next, underlines the need to look into both structure and agency. But my interpretation of the interaction between these two is leaning slightly to the agency side.

On top of the structure-agency debate, another point of divergence in the studies of international relations and foreign policy analysis has been whether it is the ideological needs or the material capabilities of a given country that dictates its

²⁷ In accordance with its name, World Systems Theory focuses on the international and sometimes even global level of analysis.

foreign policy. As Valerie M. Hudson (2002: 4, see also 2005: 3) points out, it is necessary to look into both of these, and the correct intersection of ideational and material factors “is not the state, but human decision-maker.”

On the surface the dichotomy between the ideational and material aspects in the minds of foreign policy decision-maker seems an unnecessary simplification: while material components would bring the behaviour of a state dangerously close to the already rejected ideas of rational actor and the billiard-ball analogy, ideational aspects alone hardly explain the behaviour of any state, since it is just not possible to run the foreign policy of a country based on ideology alone. For example, even in the midst of the revolutionary chaos of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), Mao Zedong managed to steer China towards *rapprochement* with the United States, which he had previously described as a ‘paper tiger.’²⁸

However, the ideological influences in Chinese foreign policy should not be underestimated either. Chinese ideology is often linked to history, culture and/or a ‘grand strategy’, as exemplified by Alastair Ian Johnston in his *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (1995) and Huiyun Feng in her *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Confucianism, Leadership and War* (2007). While both books are of interest to this study, as they discuss the likelihood of the use of military as an extension of Chinese foreign policy, they are of only limited value: Johnston (1995: 260) explicitly avoids “spelling out implications” of his conclusions (that Chinese strategic thinking does not differ so much from offensive realism) and Feng’s purely quantitative analysis of decision-makers speeches (also important in this study) lacks, in my opinion, in building a context, and in its purpose to explain China’s international behaviour as peaceful as possible, it shares the aforementioned problems of the Chinese school of IR.

In any case, and in the vein of Valerie Hudson (2005), it is necessary to look into both ideational and material aspects of foreign policy. This comes especially clear in role theory, which attempts to merge both ideational and material aspects

²⁸ Although Mao did explain this move with ideational reasons as well, criticising Soviet ‘revisionism.’

in national role conceptions, as will be discussed in detail in below. The understanding among the scholars of role theory about the need to understand both structure and agency as well as the ideational and material aspects of foreign policy have influenced my work, too, and have tilted the balance in my theoretical thinking to the side of role theory. Another reason for this choice of emphasis lies in role theory's relation with speech acts as foreign policy.

2.3.2. Speech Acts as Foreign Policy

The main task of a decision-maker is obviously to make decisions. However, in the realm of foreign policy they often have another important role: they inform others, such as other decision-makers, the media, the general audience, and so on, of those decisions. Often this takes place in the form of speech acts. As Nicholas Onuf (quoted in Zehfuss 2002: 152) has argued, such speech acts are “social performances” with “direct social consequences.” As the realm of foreign policy is socially constructed, speech acts with consequences are thus foreign policy *per se*, not ‘just’ communication, a way of conveying a message, but an “activity of normative consequences” (Onuf 2015: 77).

This kind of approach to speech as actual foreign policy approaches the speech act theory formulated by John Searle, according to whom, speech acts can “create social reality,” if they take place in the correct context. (Searle 199: 133). Thus, I have paid special attention to the context of my own material, as explained in chapter 1.4.1: most of the speeches chosen for this study have been given in summit meetings where many heads of state and governmental officials have been present, giving the speeches extra importance.

Considering the speech acts of foreign policy decision-makers as actual foreign policy raises the importance of understanding the views of those decision-makers to new heights. This puts Hudson's (2005: 20) notion of the “country- or area-expertise” in its proper context. In order to analyse the speech acts of decision-makers, that is, to identify both the ideational and material aspects embedded in their language, it is indeed necessary to have not only expertise in the language they speak, but also an understanding of the political situation, history, cultural heritage,

opportunities and restraints of the society, and so on. In essence, one has to be able to distinguish the impact of structure and agency as well as the ideational and material components in foreign policy.

Alastair Ian Johnston sees speech as being especially important when studying China in times of political uncertainty. According to Johnston (2013: 7) “‘talk’ is consequential for both interstate and intrastate politics during intensifying security dilemmas and strategic rivalries.” However, the importance of speech acts does not diminish when states are actively building cooperation rather than just mitigating conflicts. Interestingly, Wen Jiabao, the Chinese Premier in 2003–2013 whose speeches have a major role in this study, seems to agree with the linkage between the sayings of a national leader and country’s foreign policy. When speaking at the ASEAN+3 Summit in Kuala Lumpur in December in 2005, Wen, while discussing China’s support for the ASEAN, made this link himself: “What we have said, we will do” [我们说到的一定会做到] (Wen 2005a). However, it should of course be kept in mind that one has to also use contextual knowledge to distinguish between different forms of speech acts, between polite phrases of the diplomats and the actual foreign policy behaviour of a country.

So far, I have been flagging my own viewpoint in this particular study: that in my research on Chinese foreign policy I am following constructivist foreign policy analysis with an emphasis on interpretative explanation and, by focusing on the Chinese top decision-makers in my research, the individual approach. Next, I will introduce a theoretical framework that in my opinion fulfils these particular criteria: role theory.

2.4. Role Theory

This part of chapter 2 focuses on the specific theoretical framework I have chosen to follow in my study, role theory. I will first explain the sociological background of the theory as well as introduce its key concepts, paying special attention to the national role conception, a concept of particular importance for this study. In essence, I argue in accordance with Duggan and Naarajärvi (2015: 2) that roles are “social positions that make intuitive sense to the policymakers responsible for the

foreign policy of their state.” I will also briefly discuss the historical roles of China: during its long history, China has occupied several different roles, and although many of the changes in these roles have taken place during the last 200 years, the current roles of China have roots in its earlier roles, and in the historical understanding behind these roles.

Next I will move to more detailed analysis of the recent development of role theory, and explain the solution offered by role theory to the structure-agency debate. I will also discuss in more detail the other ‘dichotomy’ described in the previous section, the ideational-material division and its relation to the idea of foreign policy roles as social constructs, as it is more closely related to this particular study. Furthermore, I will pay special attention to the ways a country can manoeuvre in role conflicts – or mismatches of role expectations (Nabers 2011: 78) – which refer to situations that seemingly force a country to make changes to its role enactment. These strategies, closely linked with the ego and alter expectations of a role, later provide the main frameworks for my case studies.

Lastly in this section I present a critical overview of the earlier research literature combining role theory and China. While rare until 2000s, today both role theory and its China-related endeavours have become more common. However, as both the theory and its use in China studies are still in the process of becoming established, gaps in the role theoretical study of Chinese foreign policy can be identified. On this basis I will introduce the *raison d'être* for this particular study: the way this study add to the existing body of research literature and why, in my opinion, role theory is particularly useful in the study of China’s neighbourhood policy and territorial disputes. Thus, the shape of this study, role theoretical analysis of China’s behaviour towards its neighbours in Central Asia, Southeast Asia and eastern maritime region (Japan), is explained with an emphasis on a theoretical approach.

2.4.1. Origins and Key Concepts of Role Theory

Role theory, with roots in George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism,²⁹ was initially introduced to the study of interaction between sovereign states by Kalevi Holsti in his seminal article "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy" (1970). In this article, Holsti (ibid: 246) explains the general aim of role theory to the study of foreign policy as follows: "role theory, transposed to the international context, offers a framework for describing national role performance and role conceptions and for exploring the sources of those role conceptions."

Holsti, referring to sociologists such as Mead, John Dewey, and John Wahlke, proposes that the concept of *role* refers to the actual human behaviour, *role performance*, such as the decisions and actions made by individuals that guide the foreign policy of a state. This role performance, according to Holsti, is defined by *role conception*, result of the interaction of *role prescription* (external, or alter, expectations) with the ego, or internal expectations (Holsti 1970: 239). To put it simply, individual's actions are defined by his or her own motivation while influenced (to a varying degree) by the expectations of others. Role theory seems a very simple and intuitive explanation for the behaviour of individuals, but before Holsti it had not been applied to the behaviour of nations, or to foreign policy analysis.

In generalising role theory to the level of state behaviour, Holsti (1970: 245–246) suggests that the foreign policy of a state is, in fact, national role performance, which includes "patterns of attitudes, decisions, responses, functions and commitments towards other states." These patterns he called national roles. Subsequently, he saw *national role conceptions* (NRC) to include

the policymakers' own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems. It is their

²⁹ Both the term 'symbolic interactionism' and its use as an approach of sociology was fully developed by Herbert Blumer, a student of Mead's, in the 1930s (see e.g. Dingwall 2001).

"image" of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment (Holsti 1970: 245–246).

Using such an interpretive approach in the study of states' foreign policy behaviour is naturally difficult. It has proved especially challenging to define the motivations of a state in an empirically satisfying manner in an era that emphasises the international structure, as described earlier in this chapter. According to Holsti (1970: 247),

It is necessary, however, to acknowledge critical differences in the characteristics of nominally integrated societies in nation-states, organizations, and groups and the relatively unintegrated international milieu. The concepts of position and alter raise particularly difficult problems when transposed to foreign policy analysis. Individual foreign policy decisions and actions can be seen as attempts to enact national role conceptions; typical decisions are at least consistent with these conceptions. The international system can be conceived analytically not only as patterns of interaction, but also as a particular distribution of various national role conceptions at any given time.

The challenge for Holsti's idea was all the greater due to the dominance of theories emphasizing rational choice, such as realism and liberalism, with a tradition of positivist empiricism. Holsti, while building his work on an empirical methodology, also showed some understanding for approaches that would later to be known as reflectivist:

To explain different national role conceptions in different states (e.g., Sweden as a mediator, Burma as an isolate), we might look to such varied sources as: location and major topographical features of the state; natural, economic and technical resources; available capabilities; traditional policies; socio-economic demands and needs as expressed through political parties, mass movements, or interest groups; *national values, doctrines, or ideologies*; *public opinion "mood"*; and the *personality or political needs of key policymakers*. (Holsti 1970: 246, italics added)

Partly due to this discrepancy between role theory's reflectivist ideas and the lack of matching methodology, role theory did not gain much ground during the two decades after Holsti's 1970 article, and it was occasionally criticised even by its own few proponents for the lack of methodological tools necessary for making the theory more relevant (Walker 1987: 241). But while not completely unfounded, the critique of role theory before 1990s must be seen in context: the dominance of rational choice in the study of foreign policy gave only limited room for research traditions interested in norms, values and identity, those ideational forces behind foreign policy that are so commonplace in today's constructivist works. Moreover, the agent-structure debate was at the time heavily leaning to the side of the structure.

While there has been only a few attempts to define China's historical foreign policy roles, it is safe to assume that those roles have closely followed China's relations with the neighbouring countries and regions. Thus, the roles of imperial China would probably have followed the Sinocentric world order, and the identity as well as historical understanding of China as the centre of the world, surrounded by barbarians, would have spilled over to the Chinese foreign policy roles as well. Dealings with foreigners, executed often in ritualistic patterns following the tributary traditions, would have supported this role. Thus, the role of imperial China would have been one of a great power of its own time: imperial China was *the* power capable of influencing the surrounding international structure.

Thus, the 'century of humiliation' [*bainian guochi*, 百年国耻] from the mid-19th century onwards was not disastrous only to the Chinese state in the physical sense, but it also caused it a major role conflict: while clearly not in the position to act according to the earlier, dominant role it had assumed, China nevertheless tried to do so, increasing the chaos of the late 19th century even more. The whole empire suffered from conflicting role expectations not only from the outside, imperialist powers, but also from the inside of the country, where the expectations regarding e.g. the modernization of the Chinese state received mixed answers.

After the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, which ended the imperial era in China, the new republic seemed to assume a less dominant role, acknowledging the limitations it had in its foreign policy. This eased to a certain extent the role conflicts

it had in its foreign relations, while the numerous civil wars within China between 1911 and 1949 tell a story of conflicting ego expectations towards the decision-makers³⁰ who had only limited resources at their disposal, resulting in incoherent national role conceptions: China in the early 20th century, the ‘Sick man of Asia’ was unable to act in almost any sustainable role.

It is thus small wonder that since the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949, the role of a victim has been visible in China’s foreign relations. Partly to legitimise the rule of the Communist Party, partly to enable the chosen foreign policy, victimhood has marked the rhetoric of China until the 2000s. In his quantitative study of late 1960s Holsti (1970: 274) identifies such Chinese roles as *bastion of revolution* and *anti-imperialist agent* as especially strong, and during this time the change could be explained at least partly with the radicalism of Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). As described later on, these roles developed in the early 1990s further towards more reformist ideas that would have been in accordance with the policies of China starting in the late 1970s.

Thus, and in accordance with the discussion of China’s idea of a great power I presented in the introduction to this study, it is especially interesting to look into the roles of China in the 2000s. This is even more so, as the contemporary, constructivist role theory offers much more appropriate tools for such a study than the mechanical counting of ‘role utterances’ that was in vogue before the rise of reflectivist approaches to international relations.

2.4.2. Role Theory in the 2000s

As the relations between agent and structure, as well as the research focus emphasising both the ideational and the material are very present in role theory, it is quite natural that the theory has made a comeback during the 2000s. Beginning with an appearance in *Handbook of Sociological Theory* (Turner 2001), role theory

³⁰ While naturally many of China’s problems during this era had only a little to do with the country’s international roles, some of the most well-known conflicts were clearly related to it, such as the May Fourth Movement of 1919, where the driving force was the disappointment of the students with the government’s incapability to protect China’s interests.

started to flourish with the joint research of Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns W. Maull (2001), their separate works (Maull 2007; Harnisch 2009) and by Cameron Thies (2010), to name but a few. At the same time, the theory itself has experienced substantial progress and today, Harnisch (2016a: 5) sees international roles as “primary components of international social structures.”

The most notable development has taken place in the general framing of the theory: it has incorporated to itself several aspects of constructivism. As Harnisch (2011: 8) explains, role conceptions include “an actor’s perception of his or her position vis-à-vis others (ego part of a role) and the perception of the role expectations of others (the alter part of the role) as signalled through language and action.” Subsequently, role conceptions include both the Wendtian “social identity of an actor” and “the actions and perceptions of the others” (ibid.). Role conceptions are, therefore, closely connected to self-identity, but include the external element of alter expectations towards the actor in question. In other words, both structure and agency are included in role theory.

Since in the realm of international policy it is the states that are considered primary actors, they have *national* role conceptions (NRC) rather than *personal* ones. Today these national role conceptions are understood to be “domestically held political self-views or self-understandings regarding the proper role and purpose of one’s state in the international arena” (Krotz 2008, cited in Harnisch 2011: 15). According to Marijke Breuning, NRCs are “defined by decision maker” and “relevant to *issue area* and *geographic domain*” (2011: 26, italics in original). Hence, a given country can have multiple foreign policy roles that are connected to the various NRCs, creating the role set of that country. In the light of Krotz’s and Harnisch’s description of national role conceptions this is only natural, since while the leaders of a given country may have conflicting views on e.g. its neighbouring countries, those neighbours would also have various expectations towards the country in question. Similarly, it is likely that a given country’s role sets includes different roles in the context of a single neighbour but different issue areas, such as economic and security issues, or even between individual leaders of a given country.

These collections of different roles of a country are called *role sets* (Harnisch 2011: 8).

Naturally, the role performance or *role enactment* of a country, its behaviour in the international arena, is often dominated by one role conception over the others. In most cases these role conceptions are not that much at odds with each other, as can be seen in this study when discussing the case of China and Central Asia. While China is far more powerful than its Central Asian neighbours, it seems that China's interpretation of the role prescriptions directed at it by its Central Asian neighbours are largely compatible with its own view on the situation, calling for political prudence instead of more dominating behaviour: China, while supporting the Central Asian countries economically, is not projecting its military power over the region (Naarajärvi 2012a: 116). The cases of Southeast Asia and Japan are, however, very different. The economic relations between China and its maritime neighbours make them more and more interdependent, but the growing Chinese military capabilities seem to have a disruptive impact on these relationships, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5 of this study.

Furthermore, the NRCs depend, apart from issue area, geography, or external expectations, also on the domestic ego expectations. This can have a major impact on the NRC, as can be seen in the case of China and Japan. For example, due to the aggravated domestic opinion towards Japan, the Chinese decision makers have to navigate carefully in their statements on and towards their neighbour (Shirk, 2011: 242–245). In terms of role theory, Chinese ego expectations towards the country's role on Japan are much more negative than e.g. the economic relations between the two countries would lead us to assume – although the future of the economic interdependence between the two is not altogether promising either (Dreyer, 2014). The recent developments regarding the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands have also impacted the alter expectations of Japan towards China, increasing the concern over China's rising power.

However, it is important to make a clear distinction between the 'real' alter expectations towards an actor and how those expectations are perceived by an actor. While it is completely possible that an actor perceives the expectations of the other,

signalled through language and action, precisely as they were originally intended, we cannot assume this is always the case. Communication is notoriously easy to misinterpret, either accidentally or on purpose. The original message might be unclear, confusing or outright contradictory. Moreover, in the realm of contemporary international politics, a message does not arrive alone: there will be many of them, coming from different sources and making it sometimes difficult to perceive and interpret any of them correctly.³¹

Thus, in my opinion, in research focusing on role expectations, the emphasis should be more on the ego aspect. It is the actor, ego part of a role, who interprets the message conveying the expectations of an alter part. And when the actor is doing this, his or her interpretations are being influenced by his/her understanding of the ideational and material components involved in the decision-making process. Hence the foreign policy behaviour of a country, even when it is a reaction to an external impact, is in fact an act of role enactment where a country is behaving according to its own national role conception.

According to Breuning (2011: 16), “role theory centrally concerns itself with this interaction between agent and structure.” Moreover, although Breuning does talk of the perception of the international structure instead of the structure itself, I wish to further emphasise the domestic interpretation of the structure and thus put more weight on the agency side in the structure-agency debate. While the international structure undeniably has an impact on a nation’s foreign policy, it is not meaningful to use the old billiard-ball analogy to describe it. Instead, a scholar of foreign policy should look more closely to the domestic setting of a nation and attempt to analyse the way the alter expectations are interpreted within a given country in order to construct the national role conception in a more meaningful manner. This interpretation of role theory, emphasising the domestic, ego aspect of national role conception, brings it closer to the original idea of Kalevi Holsti, who “favored domestic sources of national role conceptions, without denying the

³¹ Osmo A. Wiio (1985), in his analyses of human communication, established the so-called Wiio’s Laws that can be summarized as “communication usually fails, except by accident.” Communication between sovereign states seems to follow this rule regularly.

significance of external influences” (Breuning 2011: 19, see also Holsti 1970: 242–243).

Therefore, to follow the constructivist, ‘European’ tradition of role theory,³² and in order to define the national role conceptions of China, I have to find out both how China sees itself (ego part of a role) and how China perceives others’ attitudes towards itself (ego interpretation of alter expectations). To do this I will focus on the ideational and material components in China’s national role conceptions. I will follow the cognitive model of role theory described by Breuning (2011: 26), in which she divides the components of an NRC in two groups, based on their origin. The ideational components include identity, cultural heritage and domestic audience and represent the agency side of her framework. Material components, i.e. capability and opportunity thus represent the structure. This kind of division resembles the discussion above on the sources of foreign policy in the general discussion of the FPA.

While I agree with Sebastian Harnisch in that “China’s international roles and its positioning in the international social order cannot be explained *only* or even primarily by external expectations” (2016a: 3, italics in the original), and having above positioned my own research on the agency side of the structure-agency debate, I nevertheless find Breuning’s balanced model useful: after all, I do not try to deny the structural impact itself, but merely to argue that its alter influence on the national role conception and subsequently on the role enactment (foreign policy behaviour) is not direct, but travels via language and through the domestic, ego part of the equation. In fact, one of the interests in this study is to find out which one, structure or agency, is primarily present in China’s national role conceptions. Thus, I will look into Breuning’s five components (see figure 1.) in more detail.

³² According to Sebastian Harnisch (2011: 7), today’s role theorists have largely been divided to the American tradition, emphasising material and cognitive factors of a role, and the European thinking that focuses on “language and social interaction,” with some scholars occupying the Adlerian “middle ground.”

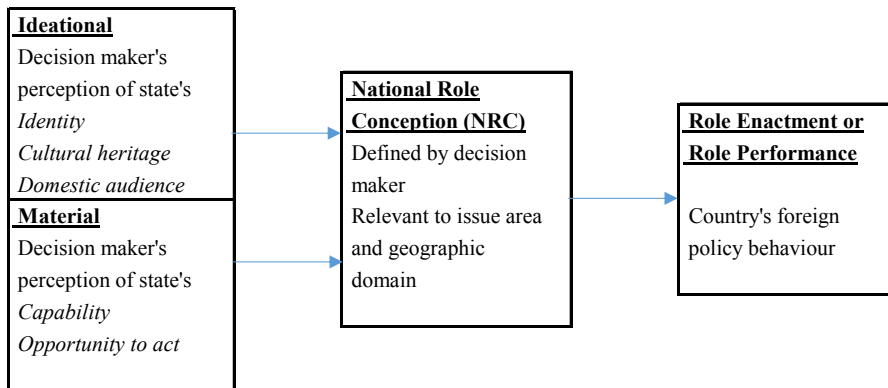


Figure 1: Components and Impact of National Role Conception (Breuning 2011: 26)

Identity

There is an abundance of research conducted on Chinese identity. As the country is a multi-ethnic unitary state, Chinese identity is an elusive concept and a large share of the identity issues in China reflects the various ethnic identities within and outside the People’s Republic of China. While these are of utmost importance to anyone interested in the mosaic of ethnicities within China and their sometimes problematic coexistence in a country almost obsessed with the concept of ‘unity’ and with one ethnicity (Han Chinese) in almost absolute control of power, the focus of this particular research is slightly different.

In the past, identity and role were sometimes treated (mistakenly) as the same thing. As explained by Harnisch (2016a: 8), identities are “self-descriptions that refer to an ‘other’ for demarcation purposes.” Roles, as described above, are social positions that include both the ego and alter components and have a behavioural aspect. Moreover, while a country can simultaneously perform several different roles, it has, according to Harnisch (ibid: 9), “only one social identity... in international society.” Identity, while covering the whole nation, is only a building block, albeit a strong one in the country’s international role that affects it to varying degrees.

Therefore identity, as a component of a national role conception, can be found in the ego aspect of the NRC, and it arises from the minds of the national leaders. It is what they think China *is*: in the context of China's rise, the question has often been whether China is a developing country or a great power. In this regard, for China, identity approaches the concept of status, which is of course directly linked to China's foreign policy behaviour. Therefore, the key to the Chinese identity, their self-understanding of China as an international actor, must be searched for in the statements of the Chinese foreign policy makers as well: what do they consider China to be?

Growing from the ego side of the national role conception, identity in foreign policy roles has less to do with the neighbouring countries than with e.g., the domestic audience. In the context of this particular study, the main identity-related question refers to the issue of whether China is a great power and if so, what kind of a great power it is. As discussed in the introduction to this study, China's view of itself has undergone a profound transformation, and thus it should be possible to find evidence of this change in terms of role theory as well. While the Chinese leadership before 18th Party Congress in 2012 avoided calling China a great power, the roles they constructed for China in their speeches speak their own language: during the second term of Hu Jintao, the idea of China's great power role was becoming more and more visible.

Domestic Audience

Domestic audience, also known as popular opinion, is another ideational component of the national role conception (NRC). While the NRC is always linked to specific issue area as well as to a geographical domain, this is especially relevant in the case of the domestic audience. Both cultural heritage and identity are fairly broad issues that usually stay close to the "default" setting of a nation. Domestic audience is quick to pick up policy issues it feels especially strongly, and thus it can escalate the foreign policy behaviour as well. This is particularly relevant in China, where the rule of the CCP is largely based on their track record in economic, but also foreign policy issues. The promise of preventing the repetition of the pre-

revolution grievances is an important part of the CCP legitimacy to rule (Shirk 2011: 227).

In Chinese foreign policy, among those issues that set the domestic audience in motion there are three that rise above others: Japan, Taiwan and the United States.³³ All three are also meticulously covered by the Chinese media, both commercial and public, and while the latter has a tendency to play down the possible confrontations in order to help the decision makers, the former has proved to be profit-driven and consequently willing to dramatise events in order to attract wider audiences (ibid: 225–226).

Moreover, the makers of Chinese foreign policy have become increasingly aware of this aspect of their changing society. While they are aware that the ‘netizens’ [*wangmin*, 网民] do not represent the society as a whole, and of the well-known fact that it is the discontent, rather than those happy with any given situation, that flock the internet discussion sites, “China’s insecure leaders pay close attention to the commercial media and the Internet and treat it as a reflection of what the public actually is thinking” (ibid: 26–27). Even the existence of the ‘fifty-cent party’ [*wumaodang*, 五毛党] of paid online supporters of the government policies does not help the decision makers to ignore the extremely polarised online atmosphere.

The relationship with Japan is especially vulnerable to hijacking by the infuriated mob of the Chinese internet-using population. To certain extent the CCP has itself to blame, as the anti-Japanese rhetoric has been an inseparable part of its own propaganda for legitimacy since the pre-revolutionary times, and has been in frequent use in the People’s Republic of China. While the Chinese leadership has repeatedly stressed that their criticism is aimed at ‘certain individuals’ in Japan and that they do not see the country as a whole responsible of the actions of their leaders, the difference is subtle and is often neglected among the rioters on the streets of major Chinese cities, throwing rocks at the institutions they consider Japanese,

³³ While for China the Taiwan issue is officially a domestic matter, it has far-reaching implications in Chinese foreign policy: any country dealing with Taiwan must tread carefully in order not to attract the ire of Beijing. Thus the support of the U.S or Japan to Taiwan always gets an angry reaction from the Chinese government, influencing China’s bilateral relations with these two countries.

including Japanese-built vehicles. Thus, in the context of this research, the domestic audience needs to be taken in account in the Chinese NRC in relation to Japan.

At the other end of the spectrum, Central Asia does not seem to bring up much emotion among the Chinese. This became clear in my earlier research which focused on China's Central Asian relations in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the media coverage on Central Asia in *Huanqiu Shibao* [环球时报] between 1996 and 2003 (Naarajärvi 2007).³⁴ Chinese media covering Central Asia usually focused on the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which, being an important tool for the Chinese foreign policy, gave in most cases the coverage a positive undertone.

The case of Southeast Asia and the disputed islands on the South China Sea falls in between these two ends on the spectrum of Chinese domestic audience's tendency to form strong opinions. While the Chinese media staunchly supports the claims of the Chinese leadership on Paracel and Spratly Islands, the Chinese public has not been marinated in the thick sauce of anti-Philippines, anti-Vietnamese or anti-Malaysian sentiments. While the relatively high number of sides involved in the dispute makes it more difficult to aim propaganda, the existence of ASEAN, another multilateral regional organization, has also had a calming effect on much of the coverage at least until recently. Thus, in the case of Japan the influence of the domestic audience in the construction of the national role conception gets more attention, while in the case of Central Asia there is less focus on public opinion. The case of Southeast Asia falls in between these two.

Cultural heritage

The third component of the ideational aspects of the national role conception, cultural heritage, is in the case of China the historical understanding of the Chinese leaders about their own country in relation to others. As Breuning (2011: 26) sees it, historical ego aspects connected to country's identity are especially important.

³⁴ In 2009 *Huanqiu Shibao* started to be published in English as *Global Times*, quickly acquiring notoriety as a hawkish and populist publication that international media often follows to extract controversial statements.

In China's case the influence of cultural heritage is undoubtedly strong, as China's unparalleled history in East Asia and its long-term status as the regional cultural and political paragon puts it in an advantageous position in relation to all of its neighbours. Thus, one might claim that the Chinese cultural heritage approaches its identity, seeing China as a great power surrounded by weaker countries. In the research on China's national role conception, however, we have a more historical view.

As the national role conceptions are tied to a specific geographical and temporal situation, it allows a scholar to look into the relevance given to e.g. history by the Chinese leaders. For example, by repeatedly mentioning the long and rich Chinese history and culture, a Chinese decision-maker actively constructs the NRC in question. Or, by referring to the tradition of peaceful relations China has had with its neighbours, a decision-maker is actively constructing a continuum of cultural heritage expanding to times when China was not only the political, but also the cultural centre of the East Asia. Therefore, while the cultural heritage of China is inseparable from the Chinese identity, as it is among other nations as well, China, not least according to many Chinese themselves, has a special place among the few ancient civilizations in the world, and any reference to this position will be a sharp reminder to the (foreign) audience that their respective civilizations do not enjoy similar historical status.

Cultural heritage is thus another component of the national role conception that makes it more meaningful to look into China's relations specifically with its neighbours: While China is today known all over the world for its long history and rich culture, it is only its neighbours that have experienced this first-hand throughout the existence of their own societies. Chinese national leaders can, and do, refer to the long history of China for American or European audiences as well, but the message has different meaning to them than for people whose own cultural heritage includes China as an earlier source of cultural influence – an experience that is shared among the Japanese, Southeast Asians and even to certain extent the people in Central Asia.

Capabilities

Together with the ideational components of national role conception, there are material components: “Decision maker’s perception of state’s capability (i.e. usable power resources, relative to relevant other states” and “opportunity to act (possibilities afforded by circumstances, whether temporary or enduring” (Breuning 2011: 26). Once again, I wish to emphasise the word “perception:” it is the interpretation of these by the relevant decision makers that will become part of the final NRC.

Throughout the time period of my research, 2002–2012, China experienced a significant increase in its capability to execute foreign policy. This is especially so in the material sense of the word, as the Chinese economic growth continued and the ever growing financial assets were put in use in both within and outside of China. This phenomenon has been referred to as the ‘rise of China’ and it has caused concern among many scholars and policy makers all over the world. ‘Rise of China’ or ‘rising China’ has often been linked to so-called ‘China threat’ discourse that sees China as a rising power on a path to change the status quo in the world, even militarily if necessary. As Peter Gries (2005a) has explained, the view presented by the ‘China threat’ discourse is heavily influenced by the beholder’s own theoretical background, realism, liberalism or, for example, constructivism.

China’s increased economic capabilities have indeed had an impact on the country’s military might as well. While official figures have been criticised for minimizing the actual increase of the Chinese defence budget, they are impressive *per se*: according to widely accepted statistics, China’s military budget increases annually over 10%, outpacing the overall economic growth, and it has made the country if not a global military power, at least a formidable regional player (Bitzinger, 2015). This has naturally caused concern among many of China’s neighbours, especially if they have unsolved territorial issues with their big neighbour.

As my research is also about the rise of China, it is important that I look into this aspect of China’s national role conception as well. How do the Chinese leaders and scholars describe China’s increasing capabilities in foreign policy behaviour?

What does China aim to do with its rising power, i.e. what kind of role enactment does it see as purposeful? And how does the Chinese national role conception fit with the “China Threat” discourse? Naturally, and in accordance with the ideational components of China’s roles, throughout the time period of my research Chinese leaders refer to the increased capabilities of China mainly in economic terms, while at the same time often trying to convince their audience of the beneficial nature of China’s rise.

Opportunities

Increasing foreign policy capabilities give a nation more opportunities for action. A more powerful China can exert its power further. Sometimes this can be expected of it, especially if it aspires to the status of a great power.³⁵ However, these kinds of expectations fall mostly outside the focus of this research as they are part of the alter side of the role theory, representing the structure of the international system, rather than a part of the agency side of the equation.

However, as one of the strengths of role theory is its attempt to bridge structure and agency, it is not meaningful to neglect the opportunities completely. In order to link them more integrally to the national role conception, I will look into opportunities as they are seen among the Chinese foreign policy decision makers and scholars. The key to understanding the opportunities in China’s NRC is to treat them as something that China feels it important to respond to due to its NRC in any given situation: for example, the global war on terror might open an opportunity for a new foreign policy role for China, and the question then becomes whether it should it take it up. Other instances opening new opportunities during the time frame of my research would be e.g. the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean and the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, but a particularly striking example comes from the speeches of Hu Jintao in the annual summits of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. As I will describe in greater detail in chapter 3, changes in the

³⁵ This kind of discourse has become increasingly common after September 2005, when Robert B. Zoellick, then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, called for the “emerging” China to become a more “responsible” member of the international community (Zoellick 2005).

international surroundings are a reoccurring theme in Hu's speeches. While he refers to these also as potential challenges and even threats, it is clear that they are considered to offer opportunities as well.

While I agree with Nele Noesselt (2016: 177) that "role conceptions can be regarded as social constructs," I tend to go even further and see them outright as such, which explains my approach emphasising agency and the ideational over structure and the material. While not completely disregarding structural and material components of the national role conceptions, I argue that as the image of the structural impact, as well as the capabilities and opportunities of the Chinese state, conveyed as they are through language, are merely interpretations of the decision-makers of the actual reality, and are thus usually included in the agency and heavily influenced by the ideational aspects.

2.4.3. Strategies of Role Change

It is important to remember that the roles, as well as role conceptions behind those roles are not stagnant. This applies to national roles, too, as is described in the case of China in the following section. Roles change according to the situations a country is faced with at different times and in different issue areas. Harnisch (2011: 10) identifies two types for such changes: learning and adaptation. Additionally, Harnisch defines several modes of role change, of which one particular mode, *altercasting*, is discussed in greater detail in the context of this study (ibid: 13).

With role learning Harnisch refers to Jack Levy, who makes a difference between "diagnostic learning," meaning "changes in beliefs about the definition of the situation or the preferences, intentions, or relative capabilities of others" and "causal learning" which refers to "changing beliefs about the laws (hypotheses) of cause and effect, the consequences of actions, and the optimal strategies under various conditions" (Levy 1994: 285). The latter of these Harnisch also calls "complex learning" and sees it to be "consistent with behavioural role theory" (Harnisch 2011: 10–11). Moreover, according to Harnisch, "in such reading of learning processes, actors' social identities ... can undergo profound changes, changes that may even transform the actor's self-perception of who they are" (ibid.).

In the context of this study, such a process would mean a major shift in the way the Chinese decision-makers see China, and especially its identity. More specifically, a shift to an identity of a great power could be described as such change, as would be the subsequent changes in the national role conceptions and national role enactments as well.

A role change of lesser magnitude, role adaptation, describes “changes of strategies and instruments in performing a role” while “the purpose of that underlying role remains fixed” (Harnisch 2011: 10–11). Linking back to earlier work on foreign policy analysis by Charles F. Hermann (1990), Harnisch sees role adaptation to take place in the context of the three levels of Hermann’s typology of foreign policy change: increase or decrease in the use of certain instruments; changes in the ways those instruments are used; and changes in the ways the issues are perceived. Of these three the two latter ones refer to tactic and strategy, respectively.³⁶ Thus, a country can adapt its role when it feels that its current role enactment (foreign policy behaviour) does not meet the alter expectations of the countries its policies are directed at, or when it feels that its current role enactment does not meet the goals it has set for its own policies.

Apart from these two major changes in role understanding, a country can adopt less profound means of role change. Moreover, there are differences in the degree of consciousness in these changes: while role learning would most likely take place without a conscious attempt to do so, role adaptation can be seen as a much more percipient strategy of change. However, role adaptation could also happen as a result of changes in, for example, the alter expectations or material components of national role conception.

Altercasting differs from role learning and role adaptation with regard to the level of conscious action. According to Harnisch (ibid: 13, see also 2016a: 12) altercasting may refer to “conscious manipulation of one’s own role taking

³⁶ The remaining, fourth level of change in Hermann’s typology is called *International Orientation Change* and it refers to the most extreme form of change involving a complete transformation in the attitudes of the actor towards international politics and influencing several policies of such a state (Hermann 1990: 5–6).

behaviour to (re)shape the role of another actor, presumably a counter- or commensurate role.” Altercasting also takes place often in a bilateral relationship instead of a larger group, where roles are sometimes ascribed through socialization (ibid.). Altercasting can be thus seen as a more assertive method of imposing on the other a role that would better suit the (role) needs of the actor. According to Cameron Thies (2010: 6338, quoted in Harnisch 2011: 12–13), this has often been the practice of stronger, mature states towards younger, novice states, and China has experienced this kind of policy from the United States in the 20th century (Thies 2016). Ascribing an altercasted role on a country unwilling to settle in and capable of resisting such a role is thus a possible scenario, forcing an actor to fall back on other methods of role change, such as “normative persuasion” or “socialization” (Harnisch 2011: 13).

For the purposes of this study two final element of role change remain to be discussed. According to Harnisch (ibid: 14), role changes may “induce intense domestic debates, at least in democracies.” This would be in line with Holsti (1970: 299), who saw it as difficult for young states to develop “cohesive role sets” (compatible national role conceptions) until they are further involved in the international system. With this idea Holsti referred to states that in late 1960s had recently gained independence, such as Ghana, Egypt and Indonesia. While the People’s Republic of China is not really a new state, its interaction with the international system can be argued to have begun after the reform and opening policy of Deng Xiaoping, starting in late 1970s.³⁷ Moreover, the post-Tian’anmen isolation in the early 1990s, which also lies behind China’s peripheral diplomacy, would have made it a newcomer to structures that would have been existing in East and Southeast Asia before China’s entry in them. This would have made these existing role sets prone to, for example, socializing China into the existing order, and the rise of China of the 2000s would have been seen as a destabilising element in this.

³⁷ Alternatively, one could argue this to have begun already with the PRC’s accession to the United Nations in 1971.

Lastly, according to Harnisch (2016a: 14), authoritarian regimes are less able to signal their role changes to audiences that democracies are. Again, this would be connected to the above-mentioned weakness of the new states in developing cohesive role sets, or perhaps to the insecurity of the leaders of non-democratic regimes (Shirk 2011: 26–27). Harnisch (2016a: 14) links this to “lower audience costs,” where leaders would need to rely on smaller support groups and thus be less aware of the actual popular support they have for their chosen role.

These domestic debates related to country’s role change are called role contestation, which, according to Cristian Cantir and Juliet Kaarbo (2016), is either vertical or horizontal. Vertical role contestation takes place between the elites and the masses (*ibid*: 9–11), and is not uncommon even in authoritarian systems such as China. In fact, as described in chapter 5, a vertical role contestation could explain some of China’s policies towards Japan during the Diaoyu/Senkaku crisis. In addition, horizontal role contestations, taking place between political elites (*ibid*: 11–16), are not impossible in China, either. In principle, China is administrated through a system known as democratic centralism (see chapter 1.4.1), but the factionalist policies in China are well known (see e.g. Ho 2012). While some of the ‘normal’ locations for horizontal role contestations in democratic systems, such as those between government and its political opposition, or within multiparty coalitions, are not possible due to the Chinese party-state, contestations within small groups (such as Leading Small Groups of China), leader-advisory relations, and different bureaucracies are very likely.³⁸ Especially in the era of Hu Jintao who, as discussed in chapter 1.4.1, was widely considered a weak leader, horizontal role contestations may have been fairly commonplace. Again, chapter 5 of this study provides an example of a potential horizontal role contestation, although there is much less evidence for this than for vertical contestation.

³⁸ For example, according to Evan Jones (2017), a horizontal role contestation between two Chinese bureaucracies existed already in the 1980s in relation to the South China Sea dispute.

2.4.4. Previous Research on China's Foreign Policy Roles

As I suggested above, there has been only a few attempts to distinguish Chinese national role conceptions. In his seminal “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy” Holsti (1970: 274; 284) distinguished seven roles for China: six specific roles and one “other,” consisting of several, more ad hoc role statements. The six specific ones are: *example* (20 instances), *faithful ally* (16), *bastion of revolution* (14), *anti-imperialist agent* (9), *regional collaborator* (6) and *liberator/supporter* (2). Many of China's more recent roles derive from this era of radicalism as well as from the Non-Aligned Movement, including the role of a developing country and “all-weather friend of Africa” (Duggan 2016: 211–212).

For Holsti, the typology of China's national roles is defined by two major factors relevant to the time during which his research was conducted: the ongoing Cold War, and the revolutionary nature of China's foreign policy during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). In fact, Holsti names “ideological principles” as the main source of both the role of *bastion of revolution* and *anti-imperialist agent*. Interestingly, *example* had “no revealed sources” (Holsti 1970: 296–297). During to the Sino-Soviet Split, China was strongly opposed to the ‘revisionist’ thinking of Khrustsev's Soviet Union, thus competing for the socialist development model in the world, which should explain the numerous references to *example* and to some extent to *bastion of revolution* as well. The radicalism of Cultural Revolution would explain the remaining roles of *bastion of revolution* as well as the role of *anti-imperialist agent*.

After Holsti, the national role conceptions of China were not systematically researched until the 1990s, when a study was conducted by Onnig Beylerian and Christopher Canivet (1997).³⁹ As a part of larger study tracking post-Cold War national roles, this study nevertheless seems to confirm the massive change in Chinese foreign policy that took place during the Chinese reform era. The revolutionary activism had almost completely disappeared, and instead China

³⁹ However, for example Shih Chih-yu (1988) used the national role conception approach to what he called “Chinese psychoculture” in Chinese diplomacy.

wanted to be seen as *advocate of peaceful coexistence and international cooperation* (34 instances) (ibid: 204). Rather than spearheading revolution, China's main roles were defined as *reformer of the international order* (21) and *good neighbour* (20). Other major roles included *independent actor* and *reconciler of regional conflicts* (both 19), *practitioner of openness to the outside world* (16) as well as *consolidator of the United Nations and defender of the world peace* and *opponent of hegemonism* (both 15) (ibid.).⁴⁰

The change, in the words of Kenneth Lieberthal (1995), "from revolution through reform," is clear. In a post-Tian'anmen situation China was keen to look for friends and partners, while at the same time the post-Cold War world order with the hegemony of a single superpower was not to its liking. The new security concept, emphasising diplomacy and economic cooperation between nations with different political and cultural settings was initiated, as was the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. China was painfully aware of its limitations in the arena of international politics.

Both Holsti as well as Beylerian and Canivet have, I believe, two major methodological shortcomings in their respective works. Firstly, both publications are aiming to list the Chinese *general* foreign policy roles. Later scholarship on role theory is very clear on the nature of national role conceptions: as mentioned above, they are "defined by decision maker" and "relevant to *issue area* and *geographic domain*" (Breuning 2011: 26). While illustrating the more general foreign policy roles of a nation is interesting, it is not so relevant for the purpose of foreign policy analysis. Even Holsti himself agrees (1970: 243–244) that there are plenty of situations where a country chooses to act against its prevailing national role conceptions, often in favour of national sovereignty.

The second shortcoming is not uncommon in the study of Chinese foreign policy: the sources selected are all in English. Neither Holsti nor Beylerian and

⁴⁰ While Holsti is fairly vague about his sources, he mentions 37 sources for "Communist China" with at least *Peking Review* as one source (Holsti 1970: 257; 260). Holsti's study included 70 nations and 17 roles with minimum of 10 sources each. Beylerian and Canivet (1997: 199–201) are more specific with their methodology, mentioning 49 speeches by ten Chinese leaders.

Canivet had access to sources in Chinese, either due to the lack of such resources, or the lack of language proficiency needed to read them. In fact, Beylerian and Canivet (1997: 199) mention the limited choice of material “given the restricted number of texts available in English.” While it can be argued that translated versions of statements and speeches carry an important function in a state’s foreign policy, even my own, limited research shows discrepancies between the original, Chinese versions and the later publications in English.⁴¹

Even with their shortcomings, these two previous publications do show a certain pattern in the development of China’s foreign policy roles. It is not difficult to track the development in China’s foreign policy roles and the connection they have to the foreign policy behaviour, or role enactment of China. The radical (or Maoist) interpretation of Marxism was gone, as was the revolutionary rhetoric. China was slowly adapting to the international order mainly as a rule-taker, while at the same time making it clear that some elements of the post-Cold War world were not ideal to it or its neighbours and friends. Revolution was passé, reform was the way forward.

In the 2000s, a few more of studies on Chinese foreign policy roles have appeared. They have moved towards the current research tradition of role theory and have been less interested in quantitative analysis of role statements and more focused on more general analysis of Chinese roles. “Hesitant Adaptation: China’s New Role in Global Policies” by Gottwald and Duggan (2011) stands as a case in point. This chapter in the volume edited by Harnisch, Frank and Maull (2011) traces China’s development from a bystander to a global player with two case studies: China’s Africa policy and the Chinese reaction to the international financial crisis in 2008. According to the authors, China has recently, and reluctantly, started to participate more in global governance (Gottwald and Duggan 2011: 249).

⁴¹ A case in point would be a speech by State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan, which in English translation (available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t871610.shtml) stated the need to go back to the old path of challenging the international order and other countries. In the original, Chinese version (Tang 2011c) the word 不 (*bu*) shows that the original meaning of the sentence was quite the opposite.

Subsequent work by Duggan and Naarajärvi (2015) continues on China's Africa policy and food security, revealing the signs of growing Chinese interest in reforming the structures of global governance towards what in its opinion is a more balanced direction. This study, too, focuses on China's role development, or the strategies China has used to solve the role conflicts it has met while trying to answer to both domestic and external role expectations. With its increasing amount of foreign policy, China is sometimes finding it difficult to answer to all existing alter- and ego-expectations towards its roles, but has so far been able to solve these conflicts by increased participation in global governance.

China's International Roles, edited by Harnisch, Bersick and Gottwald (2016), stands out among the studies of China through role theory. The edited volume includes several empirical chapters on top of a substantial theoretical framework. Thus, it is hardly a surprise that, together with the edited volume by Harnisch, Frank and Maull (2011), my own research builds largely on the articles included in *China's International Roles*, especially when it comes to the theoretical assumptions regarding contemporary role theory.

In that volume Bart Dessein (2016) traces China's historical roles from Qing-dynasty (1644–1911) through the concept of *tianxia*, or “all-under-heaven.” For Dessein (ibid: 22), Chinese 19th-century nationalism was not “a radical break from tradition” but instead part of social continuum that had the idea of the Chinese nation-state at its other end, with possibly far-reaching implications to China's foreign policy doctrine of “going out” [*zhouchuqu*, 走出去]. Also Harnisch (2016b: 38–58) sees historical self-identification as a major part of China's contemporary international role(s). This view itself is not new, as the creating and safeguarding of a ‘correct’ historical narrative has been one of the main CCP tools for power legitimization throughout its rule (Lary 2008). Harnisch (2016b: 47–52) sees historical continuation also in China's maritime territorial dispute with Japan, where China needed to adjust its role behaviour according to the realities of the situation in 2012–2014.

While making an unprecedented contribution to the role theoretical study of China, *China's International Roles* still leaves room for further development. For

example, the case studies of the volume represent many different regions, dealing with e.g. China's roles towards international institutions, the United States, Africa, the international system, and other socialist countries. Only two chapters discuss issues that could be considered to belong to China's peripheral diplomacy: China-Japan relations are analysed by Sebastian Maslow (2016) and East Asian financial order by Mikko Huotari (2016). My approach, with three cases all dealing with China's near-abroad complements the existing literature by having a specific regional focus.⁴²

Another lack in the existing literature, *China's International Roles* included, is the unsystematic use of primary sources. So far the literature discussing China's international roles has not tried to systematically define the research material used for the studies. While the use of sources in Chinese, in my opinion an absolute necessity in studies discussing identities, norms and values of China, is becoming more commonplace, the sources tend to be gathered in an *ad hoc* fashion, leaving room for questions regarding the representational power of the material. My own study, perhaps positioning itself in between the 'European' and 'American' traditions of role theory, combines constructivist research with a clearly defined empiricism, and situates itself between positivism and post-positivism as described by Harnisch (2011: 7).

Thirdly, so far there has been no systematic approach to the study of China's international roles with an emphasis on a single theme with several case studies. The recent literature includes individual works on China's roles towards international politics, certain countries and/or regions, trade and finance and so on. Sometimes these works aim also to further develop role theory itself, as e.g. Evan Jones (2017) has done with his recent article combining role theory, bureaucratic politics and China's policies on the South China Sea, but due to the limitations set by the democratic centralism in Chinese decision-making, his work includes only

⁴² Moreover, in his article "China and Japan" Maslow (2016: 192–210) approaches the topic from the Japanese perspective with mainly international and Japanese sources. This, while assisting my research in defining some of Japan's alter expectations towards China, makes the chapter less relevant in the study of China's foreign policy roles.

limited empiricism. My research attempts to build a clear thematic focus on China's near-abroad policy with an emphasis on territorial disputes, a policy issue with strong linkages to state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

These three aspects of my work give it additional value in interpreting China's international roles: firstly, the regional focus to China's near-abroad; secondly, the strictly defined empiricism aiming to gather clearly determined and relevant material related to the observed cases; and thirdly, by using a common theme of territorial disputes to all three case studies. In general, it seems that while the theoretical assumptions of contemporary role theory are well established and some works looking into the international roles of China already do exist, there is still need for more focused, systematic studies on China's roles. This study aims to fulfil a relevant part of this need.

3. LEARNING THE ROLE OF A GREAT POWER: CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIA

This chapter discusses China's relations with Central Asia with a focus on China's role change between the 16th (2002) and 18th (2012) CCP party congresses, which roughly coincide with the first operational decade of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), as well as the period of time when the remaining border disputes between China and the Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, (all, together with China, Russia and Uzbekistan, members of the SCO) were finally solved.

The beginning of the chapter discusses China's historical relations with Central Asia as well as the possible historical roles of China from the imperial era to the People's Republic of China. Approaching the contemporary times, I will discuss in more detail three different aspects of this relationship that have particular interest to China's contemporary roles: its territorial disputes in Central Asia and the process of the 1990s that resulted in the ratification of all China's borders with its Central Asian neighbours; the development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation into the main tool of China's peripheral diplomacy in Central Asia; and the issue of Xinjiang Province⁴³ and Uyghur separatism.

Next, I will look into the role change that can be seen to take place in China's Central Asian policy during the presidency of Hu Jintao. This will be analysed through the ideational and material components of national role conception, described in chapter 2.4.2, and visible in the speeches of Hu. Lastly, I will conclude the chapter with an analysis on this role change, identifying it as a process of *role learning*, the most significant type of role change, as presented in chapter 2.4.3 Moreover, the fact that China's role change has seemingly taken place *after* the solving of most of the border disputes and the subsequent cooperation

⁴³ In this work I use the terms Xinjiang Province and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) interchangeably, as XUAR is a provincial-level administrative unit of PRC. Moreover, its level of autonomy can be questioned, for example due to the lack of Uyghurs in the most powerful positions of the province: the CCP provincial committee party secretaries.

within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, necessitates further analysis on the causality of positive experiences in the processes of role change.

The concluding remarks of this chapter discuss how the role change of China was received in Central Asia and why it was this particular region that provided China with a chance for a role change of this magnitude.

3.1. China's Historical Roles towards Central Asia

As a continental power, during the more than 2000 years of its existence the Chinese empire often extended to areas that today are not part of the People's Republic: during the Tang Dynasty (618–907), often considered as the heyday of China, its protectorates reached as far as the contemporary Afghanistan. At its largest, the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) extended even beyond Lake Balkash in today's Kazakhstan and would have bordered the Ferghana Valley that today is (uneasily) shared by Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Moreover, apart from actually ruling these areas, the Chinese empire had certain influence beyond its borders, often in the form of what has been called tributary relations.⁴⁴ While in fact many of China's neighbours would have considered their 'tribute' as gifts to the Chinese emperor for permits to conduct lucrative trade within China, in the eyes of the Chinese court the barbarians outside the empire were subjugating themselves to the Son of Heaven, who ruled an empire more powerful and advanced than any other in the world (Fairbank 1970: 2–3).

However, until the 19th century, it was the people living in central Eurasia, who, more than anybody else, posed a considerable problem for the imperial Chinese worldview, as well as the foreign policy roles related to that worldview. According to the 'all-under-heaven' [*tianxia*, 天下] world view, China was

⁴⁴ The precise nature of these tributary relations is disputed, and for example Peter Perdue (2015) flatly denies their existence and criticises the users of such concept of Orientalism, while Suisheng Zhao (2015) sees some merit in it. In the context of this study it is enough to conclude that the idea of tributary relations would have been an ideological component of the Chinese role conceptions in the imperial era.

supposed to be superior to its neighbours in all aspects, including military power. While this thinking applied to China's western neighbours as well, they often constituted a major security threat to the Chinese empire: Tribes such as Yuezhi (later becoming part of the Kushan Empire) and Xiongnu (often seen as the ancestors of the Huns) troubled the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), and early Uyghurs, during the weakness caused by the An Lushan Rebellion, sacked the capital of Tang Dynasty (618–907). This was followed by Tanguts establishing their own, Western Xia Dynasty (1038–1227), which was subsequently destroyed by the Mongols, who ruled China as the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). Still, the Chinese emperors and their envoys kept relying on the domestic and ideological components of their foreign policy roles, emphasising the superiority of China and enacting roles that continued to cause role conflicts between China and its western neighbours.

All this was probably well-known to the early emperors of Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) who, nevertheless, also saw their realm as the cultural and political paragon of the era. Therefore, for example the Yongle Emperor, Zhu Di (r. 1403–1424) addressed Shāhrukh, son of Timur and the Khan of the Timurid Empire, in his letter of 1410 in a manner that enraged the leader of an empire with considerably more martial prowess. As related by Joseph Fletcher (1970: 210–214), Shāhrukh's answer led to a longer exchange that resulted in the 1418 letter of Zhu Di, in which he accepted the gifts from the Khan as gifts and not as a tribute, and abandoned his earlier manner of addressing the Khan in second person singular. Clearly, the Yongle Emperor adapted his understanding of the role of China, probably based on the reassessment of the material components of national role conception, as well as of the conflicting ego and alter expectations: China was still culturally and politically superior, while militarily falling short of its earlier role.

During most of the imperial era of China, these kinds of problems, or role conflicts, would have been solved with financial transactions, gifts and suitable marriages. The amount of goods that flew from e.g. the Han Dynasty to the warlike Xiongnu were staggering. Interestingly, these kinds of role adaptations seem to have had very little effect on the Chinese role conceptions: regardless of the

annoyance of some neighbours, which caused the imperial bureaucracy to change China's role enactment towards some of such 'vassals,' the ideological roots of the national role conceptions often continued unchanged. China was still the centre of the world, surrounded by barbarians, and adapting in one or two of its many bilateral relations did not mean it would have to do it elsewhere (Suzuki 1970).

By the mid-19th century, the Chinese Qing Empire was unable to control its vast realm in an efficient manner. Rebellions and civil wars such as *Taiping Tianguo* (1850–1864), *Nian* (1851–1868) and *Yihetuan* (1899–1901, known as Boxers in the West) as well as separatist movements like Yaqub Beq's *Kashgaria* (1861–1877) were too much to handle and, together with the foreign incursions into China, created a massive role conflict between the traditional role of a *tianxia* hegemon and the actual situation of the country. As discussed in chapter 2, from this period until the 1949 revolution, China's capability to keep up coherent role sets was weak, and this applied to Central Asia as well. Moreover, by the time the People's Republic was able to control its western parts again in 1950, the Chinese foreign policy had become dominated by the close relationship the country had with the Soviet Union, which ruled the lands west of China. Therefore, China did not enact specific roles towards Central Asia until the birth of the new republics in early 1990s, when the issues of territorial disputes, regional cooperation and Xinjiang's Uyghur separatism took centre stage in China's roles towards Central Asia.

3.1.1. China's Territorial Disputes in Central Asia

As is the case with China's territorial disputes with many of its neighbours, those in Central Asia originate in the era when the Chinese borders were not fixed or marked on maps or in the ground. Permanent habitations in the region were scarce, and the nomadic people living there moved freely across unmarked borders as they covered vast distances following to their annual migration tour. Moreover, the precise location of a certain border, thousands of kilometres away from the imperial court and without Chinese people living anywhere near the border, was not of great importance to the imperial China, which relied on its own interpretation on the relations between itself and its neighbours.

In this regard, ‘real’ land borders are a relatively new phenomenon in China’s far west. By the 17th century the Russian Empire, advancing rapidly towards the east, met with China ruled by the Qing Dynasty, also on the move to expand its control towards Central Asia, and the first border agreement between the two empires, the Treaty of Nerchinsk, was signed in 1689. However, the treaty covered areas in the Amur Region in Russia’s furthest east and China’s northeast, respectively, and thus had no real connection with Central Asia but rather with Manchuria, the origin of the ruling Manchu people of the Qing Empire (Perdue 2010: 161–173). The following treaty of Kyakhta in 1727, with additions in 1768 and 1792, the basis of the relations between China and Russia for more than hundred years, fixed the borders in the region of today’s Mongolia, opened the trade between Russia and China and freed the Qing troops to deal with the last remnant of the Mongol Empire: the Dzungar Khanate in today’s Xinjiang and in the Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (ibid.).

By the mid-19th century the control of Qing over its vast dominions had weakened to such extent that foreign powers were able to start carving concessions for themselves. Russia was no exception to this, and the Treaty of Kulja in 1851 is considered in China an ‘unequal treaty’ and part of the century of humiliation. After this China plunged in the numerous revolts and rebellions of the late 19th century, and Russia occupied the Ili region in 1871. Parts of the occupied area was returned in the Treaty of Ili (or Treaty of St. Petersburg) in 1881, establishing the contemporary border between Kazakhstan and China.

In the early 20th century Xinjiang was ruled by Chinese warlords who (especially Sheng Shicai, in charge of the province in 1933–1944) were later under considerable pressure from the Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet Split, beginning only a decade or so after the new People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, more or less locked the border issue between China and the Soviet Union. Although there were some attempts to solve the territorial disputes between the two communist giants in the 1960s and 1980s, these negotiations, also addressing the disputed areas in Russia’s Far East, accomplished very little (Ji 2013: 311–323; 372–405). Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 changed the dynamics of

these negotiations completely: suddenly China had not one, but three countries in Central Asia to deal with in the issue over the disputed borders.

China was quick to create diplomatic relations with its new Central Asian neighbours and to start the negotiations with them. At that time China would have been in an exceptionally good position to aggressively pursue its own interests in border issues: both the Russia and the new republics were weak, at least when compared to the Soviet Union. Xu Tao, a professor at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), quotes the president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, saying how, in the early years of independence, border issues with China left “a heavy legacy” (Xu 2005b: 22). Of the three new neighbours of China, Kazakhstan has always been by far the most powerful, and so it is likely that the other two were at least as concerned about China’s intentions.

Despite its position of power, China did not set out to push the new, weak neighbours into submission, but instead decided to follow a different policy. As Taylor Fravel (2008: 126) has explained, China’s quest for solutions can be described as cooperation and compromise. By helping the Central Asian countries during the time of their weakness, China tried to prove itself a trustworthy neighbour. Moreover, according to Xu Tao (2005a: 7; 2005: 23) the main needs of the new Central Asian republics, international recognition, stable peripheral belt and conditions for economic recovery and development, were in the interests of China, too.

This flexibility of China during a phase that might have resulted in a belligerent power imposing its will on small, weak neighbours has been explained in different ways. Fravel (2008: 151; 172) sees the reasoning behind China’s actions arising from the post-Tian’anmen and post-Cold War regime insecurity, aggravated by the ethnic unrest in Xinjiang Province. In essence, China’s need to cooperate was greater than was realised at the time. Others see China trying to convince the Central Asian republics of its peaceful intentions as part of China’s ‘Grand Strategy:’ that it was important for China to keep hostile powers away from the power vacuum of Central Asia (Hyer 2015: 232–233). This would be in accordance with the thinking of Tang Yongsheng, a professor at the People’s Liberation Army

National Defence University, who sees China's western areas as extremely important "strategic hinterland" [中国内陆战略腹地] (Tang, Y. 2008: 24).⁴⁵

When it comes to the border negotiations with the three Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, China let go of the previous role of a victim of imperialist powers, and chose instead a path of long negotiations, aiming at treaties that would be acceptable to both sides. The complexity of the issues related to the borders prolonged the process, too, and between 2002 and 2012 China made altogether 14 different border agreements with Kazakhstan only, while with Kyrgyzstan there were two (2004 and 2008) and with Tajikistan three (2008, 2011 and 2012) (FMPRC 2013a: 5–10).⁴⁶ More significantly, according to Zhao Huasheng (2013), Professor of International Relations at Fudan University, the negotiations were held bilaterally and in secrecy, making it easier for China to show a pragmatic attitude to its unhappy Central Asian neighbours: while the disputed areas had been of minor importance for both China and Soviet Union, they were of utmost importance to small countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

This kind of approach, described as "relational" by Huang Chiung-chiu and Shih Chih-yu (2014: 163–171), suggests that China assumed the role of the more powerful party in bilateral relationship, morally obliged to give concessions to the weaker party as long as the weaker state acknowledged the superiority of China. Seen through the prism of role theory, such a situation means there is a matching set of role expectations between ego and alter, resulting in the role of a great power, and a foreign policy enactment that would fit those expectations. As Huang and Shih show, at least in the case of Myanmar China has been using a similar approach, pursuing a "balance of relationship" (ibid: 122–124).

All in all, the territorial disputes between China and its Central Asian neighbours differ greatly from those in the two other cases of this study. The Sino-Central Asian borders were not only solved in a pragmatic and (at least mostly)

⁴⁵ "Strategic hinterland" refers to Chinese areas and provinces such as Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia etc. that are deeply inland and considered relatively safe during foreign invasions, but also provide China with an access to the westernmost province of Xinjiang, sometimes considered part of this "hinterland" as well.

⁴⁶ For an account of the actual negotiations, see Ji (2013: 430–469).

satisfactory manner to all parties, but they also seemed to pose no threat to the overall development of the regional cooperation between China and Central Asia. In fact, it seems that the institutionalisation of the cooperation developed at approximately the same pace with the border negotiations, making the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation arguably the most relevant of the numerous regional organisations in central Eurasia.

3.1.2. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

To coordinate their compatible economic and security policies in and around Central Asia, and to help in the border negotiations discussed above, China, Russia and the three Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan established a loose discussion forum called the Shanghai Five Forum [*shanghai wuguo huiwu jizhi*, 上海五国会晤机制] in 1996. Although the original agreement of cooperation between the five states was more focused on economic cooperation, it also included a clause that “entrusted the members to stand against stirring up ethno-religious nationalism” (Misra 2001: 305–306). This concept of ‘ethno-religious nationalism’ was later, once Shanghai Five Forum was upgraded into more official organisation called the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation [*shanghai hezuo zuzhi*, 上海合作组织] in 2001, redefined as the ‘Three (Evil) Forces’ [*sangushi*, 三股势] of ethnic separatism, religious extremism and national separatism, and, in the wake of the terrorist strikes in New York, the organisation linked its own actions to the ‘global war on terror’ (Naarajärvi 2012b).

In 2001 and with the addition of Uzbekistan as a member state, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) further expanded its portfolio and increased its attention on non-traditional security threats as well as on economic cooperation. In time, the SCO’s main *foci* came to be seen to be divided in three somewhat overlapping policy areas (China Daily 2006):

1. Security, both in the traditional and non-traditional sense
2. Economic cooperation, including energy

3. Cultural cooperation, and people exchanges. This is the weakest in the three, but in time this could increase especially China's interests, as the cooperation has mostly meant training of Central Asian elites in China

While the development of the SCO during its first decade was steady, it can be argued that it fell short at least of the more ambitious expectations (and fears) regarding it: it never became (as was argued all along by China) 'the NATO of the East,' nor have the SCO free trade area or the 'energy club of the SCO' become reality. As I have argued elsewhere (Naarajärvi 2012a), the importance of the SCO for China comes from the nature of the cooperation itself – from the existence of the organization – rather than from the tangible outcomes of the cooperation. For China, what the SCO *is* seems to be more important than what it *does*. While China's interests towards the Central Asian republics vary to a certain extent according to each country, they are all related to both traditional and non-traditional security issues, such as resisting the potential containment policy of the United States, fighting against separatism and terrorism both home and abroad, and closing economic cooperation that would enhance stability on both sides of the Chinese border. For this, a multilateral framework of cooperation is a perfect tool: Instead of organising high-level meetings regularly with several different countries, China, like all the other members, can arrange the high-level meetings that are necessary between authoritarian, leader-focused regimes in the form of joint summits.

Throughout the existence of the organisation, China has been paying much attention to the SCO. Moreover, it has invested large sums of money as well as international prestige in the cooperation. While this can be seen as a cost-effective tool for driving China's foreign policy goals, it serves China's international roles, too: by a common definition, a great power is able to influence international affairs on a global, or structural level. In the 1990s and early 2000s China was not able to do this, at least not routinely. The SCO was an important step on Chinese ladder towards its current status, identity and subsequent role of a great power as between a sovereign state and global community, there is a regional dimension where the

SCO exists. More importantly, and as is made clear in the speeches of Hu Jintao below, the aim of the SCO has also been to gain a more global status.

In this regard, it is hardly a surprise that the values and norms the SCO is built on, i.e. respect of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in others' internal affairs, economic cooperation as a means not only for development but also for peace and stability, are those that China has been pushing forward in its own foreign policy since the Five Principles Peaceful Coexistence of the 1950s. As will be discussed below, these are also important parts of the Chinese great power role. In fact, China's actions towards Central Asia, especially in the framework of the SCO, are extremely important when tracking the building process of that role. The SCO enabled China to create in its own terms the role of a Chinese great power, or a great power with Chinese characteristics.

In the study of China's roles towards Central Asia in the 2000s the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has a special position for two reasons. Firstly, and as discussed above, as a showcase of Chinese peripheral diplomacy the SCO has become the main tool of Chinese foreign policy in the region. Secondly, the summits of the SCO provide an unparalleled source of statements by Hu Jintao ranging from 2003 to 2012, making it possible to trace the process of role development with proper empiricism.

3.1.3. Xinjiang and Uyghur Separatism

In the beginning of the Shanghai Five Framework, China and the other member states pledged to resist 'ethno-religious extremism.' In the context of the Central Asian republics, this meant not only terrorist organisations such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, but in some cases more peaceful opposition movements as well. In China, 'ethno-religious extremism' covers separatist movements among minorities such as the Tibetans or the Uyghur people of Xinjiang Province in China's far west.

Due to geography and history, China's links to Central Asia have often been weak: Gansu Province's Hexi Corridor, linking China's traditional core area of the Central Plains [*zhongyuan*, 中原] around Yellow River, has often been controlled

by forces other than those in Chang'an (modern day Xi'an), Nanjing, Beijing or other Chinese capitals. Xinjiang, located beyond Hexi Corridor, has thus been difficult to reach. Even during the first decades of the 20th century, the road to Xinjiang went through unstable regions controlled by Chinese Muslim warlords and, if lucky, a traveller would reach Xinjiang in three week (Whiting and Sheng 1958: 3). Thus, before the victory of the communists in the Chinese civil war of 1945–1949, the province was often almost on its own, or under considerable influence by other forces such as Dzungars, the people of Central Asia, or the Soviet Union.

This remoteness complicated China's relations with Central Asia time after time, as the control of the Chinese government over Xinjiang has often been thin or occasionally non-existent, either due to the weakness of the Chinese state, local unrest, foreign incursions or in the worst case, all three at the same time. As the latest impotence of China to rule over its westernmost region, covering over 15% of the total territory of contemporary China, ended only after the intervention of the communist armies in 1949, the precarious position of the province in a state emphasising unity over all other values must occupy a prominent place in the minds of the people responsible for the territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China. In fact, in terms of role theory the need to protect the unity of China is a role expectation of both alter and ego kind for the Chinese leaders.

While the Sino-Soviet Split from the 1960s to the 1980s kept the relations between the two countries icy, this ice at least provided some stability for the relations between the two countries as well as for their domestic policies. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent establishment of the independent Central Asian republics meant that China needed to come up with foreign policies towards completely new bordering states. Moreover, while the borders shared by the Central Asian republics are as arbitrary as one can imagine,⁴⁷ resulting in complex ethnic mixtures and increasing the volatility of the region, the new republics were modelled as nation-states and named accordingly: each of the five republics is named as "country" (-*stan*), of Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Turkmens or

⁴⁷ For example, in Fergana valley the borders of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan circle each other and create isolated enclaves of one country inside the territory of another.

Uzbeks. On the Chinese side, however, there is Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), and the term ‘Uyghuristan,’ referring to an idea of independent republic of Uyghurs, is today considered completely out of the question in the eyes of Beijing.

Uyghur separatism, less visible during the early decades of the People’s Republic, got new hope from the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the independent republics of Central Asia in the early 1990s, and increased Uyghur separatist activity, sometimes resulting in acts of terrorism, has continued to this day. Chinese authorities have responded heavy-handedly, activating rounds of ‘strike hard’ (*yanda*, 严打) campaigns. Under these campaigns the security forces of China have been targeting different kinds of Uyghur dissidence, resulting in mass arrests and the use of capital punishment to an extent much more widespread than elsewhere in China (see for example Vicziany 2003).

The Uyghur people, adopting a national identity of their own only during the 20th century, have nevertheless shown considerable resistance to the idea of existing as only one of the 55 minorities that are acknowledged to live in China in addition to the Han-Chinese majority (Rudelson 1997). Thus, even in the 21st century, the Chinese government still feels its control over Xinjiang to be under threat. In the 2000s the separatist forces in Xinjiang have been linked to jihadist movements of Central Asia, Afghanistan, and beyond. In fact, while immediately after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York the Chinese government’s attempts to link the Uyghur separatists with Al Qaeda can be seen mainly as opportunism (Naarajärvi 2012b), they may have later become self-fulfilling prophecies instead: the acts of terrorism by Uyghur separatists in the 2000s have become more visible, targeting people in different parts of China in suicide attacks (Pan and Zhao 2009; Pan 2014). Unfortunately, the Chinese authorities have still found no other ways to respond to Uyghur separatism than the already familiar patterns of securitisation and repression.

Even in the eyes of Chinese analysts, the nature of Uyghur separatism has changed. Pan Guang (2008: 48) sees the earlier Uyghur separatists, who had mainly a nationalistic agenda, to be increasingly marginalised in the post-9/11 era, and to

merge with the global jihadist movements of more ideological nature, using more suicide attacks and changing targets from civilians to governmental law enforcement units thus becoming “a more serious threat” to China than before. Furthermore, together with Zhao Guojun, Pan (2009: 21) takes the link between the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) General Assembly in May 2009 and the Urumqi riots taking place in July of the same year as proof of the increase in the “internationalization plot” [国际化图谋] of the Uygur separatists of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). Moreover, Pan and Zhao (ibid: 25) see some western countries, led by the United States, to support WUC internationalization strategy for both ideological and geopolitical reasons: containment of China could in this way be combined with the promotion of “democracy,” “freedom,” “human rights” as well as “universal values.”

Moreover, historical experiences have shown that for the security of China, the control over Xinjiang has rarely been enough: the threats to the Chinese rule have often arrived outside the province, from places out of China’s reach even during the peaks of its might. Thus, one important aspect of China’s peripheral diplomacy has been to make sure China’s western neighbours have no interest in supporting or even tolerating those harbouring ill intentions towards the masters of Xinjiang. In the post-Cold War Central Asia, an approach like this was welcomed, as the leaders of the new Central Asian republics had problems of their own with both Islamic insurgents, in the form of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Hizb-ut-Tahrir, as well as with political opposition from such as parties as Birlik and Erk, all to be criminalised or in other ways dissolved during the 1990s (Naarajärvi 2007: 39). In addition, the rise of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan as well as the Tajik civil war of 1992–1997 added to the general instability of the region.

It was in this international environment, including the historical legacy of territorial disputes and mistrust, volatile domestic politics both in China and its Eurasian near-abroad, as well as a nascent regional cooperation organisation, that China experienced a significant change of both national role conception and of the subsequent international role. It was in Central Asia, I argue, that China learned to enact the role of a great power.

3.2. China's Role Change in Central Asia

In this section, I trace the development of China's great power role in the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Its annual summits enable a comparative study of role statements reflecting the national role conception of China, and by tracing similarities and the differences in the speeches of Hu Jintao, as well as by linking them with the surrounding events and the larger political context, one can reconstruct the process of role learning that led China to a new role as a great power. I will not, however, try to define an exact moment of a role change in China's foreign policy. Changes in the national role conceptions, as well as in the subsequent international roles are processes, not events.

A pattern of a kind is easily found when looking at Hu's speeches at the summits of the SCO: after thanking the host, Hu gives a quick review of the past year of the SCO, makes reference to the surrounding (and changing) international environment, and then proceeds to define the current challenges of the SCO ('Three Evil Forces,' poverty, instability, or external powers). After this he presents his suggestions on how to handle these challenges, usually by deepening or speeding up the cooperation in the fields of security, economy and cultural exchanges, thus reminding the audience of the purpose of the SCO. Towards the end of his speeches, Hu tends to reiterate China's peaceful intentions and commitment to the SCO, and offers some assistance from China, often in the form of development loans.

I have divided the ten-year time period I focus on in three phases. The first of these extends from Hu Jintao's first appearance at the SCO summit in 2003 to the summit of 2005. This period was marked by an emphasis on the development of the SCO, and China was still unsure of its position and role both on the regional and the global level. This period ended in 2005, when the 'Tulip Revolution' of Kyrgyzstan and the Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan forced the SCO, which had just finished its structure-building, to reiterate its emphasis on state sovereignty and show a united front against external criticism.

The second phase can be characterised by China's increased self-confidence and its willingness to show value in the SCO. This second phase has a more or less clear beginning in the summer of 2005, but it is not easy to define the exact end of

it: while China's great power role can be seen to be taking shape already in 2008, it is not clearly visible until 2009. During this second phase the SCO, in accordance with Chinese wishes, continued to consolidate its cooperation while also showing a tendency of inward-looking and a more suspicious attitude towards external powers such as the European Union and the US. The global financial crisis of 2007–2008 as well as the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 were the culminating points of this era: together, they showed China its new power and influence, both within and outside of the SCO, resulting in a new role of a great power.

The third phase, from 2009 onwards, focuses on China's great power role enactment. As I argue below, the slight cooling of the relations with Russia, together with the discussion on the 'three-party great game' in Central Asia underlines China's new role, as does the previously unheard ideas of 'constructive interventionism' raised within the Chinese academia. Within the SCO, China takes the leading role more openly, culminating in the 2012 pledges of USD 10bn to the SCO member states as loans, as well as in promises to train tens of thousands of officials and students from the other member states of the SCO. China was now ready to take the position of a great power openly.

In the following sections, when analysing the speeches and articles, I will pay special attention to the ideational and material components of the national role conception, as described in chapter 2. My purpose is to show how some of these components were more prone to change than others, and how China's great power role was not established until all the components were favouring, or at least not opposing, such a role.

3.2.1. Building the SCO

As described above, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was established officially in summer of 2001. Its predecessor, the Shanghai Five Forum, had been operational for five years, but did not have an official status. Thus, when Hu Jintao

assumed the chairmanship⁴⁸ of the Chinese Communist Party in November 2002–March 2003, the SCO was still in very much under construction. Hu’s weakness as a leader, discussed in the introduction of this study, is obvious in his first official speech at the summits of the SCO: in Moscow Hu (2003) both acknowledges his predecessor Jiang Zemin for his work in establishing the SCO, and refers to the new Chinese regime as “new collective leadership” [新一届中央领导集体].

The role of China in the aftermath of the CCP 16th Party Congress – in the context of SCO and Central Asia – was according to Hu (2003) to promote the “democratisation of international relations” [国际关系民主化], and the “diversity of human civilizations” [人类文明的多样性], as well as advocating a “just and rational new international political and economic order” [公正合理的国际政治经济新秩序]. Probably in the light of the recent (spring 2003) invasion of Iraq, Hu (ibid.) reminded his audience that China upholds “lasting peace and security” [持久和平与安全] that would be realised through “equal participation in international affairs” [各国平等参与国际事务]. While military action could bring a “temporary victory” [一时的胜利], it could not provide a “lasting security” [持久的安全], the naturally more attractive outcome.

This, according to Hu (2003), was in fact the purpose of the SCO: as the “crystallisation” [结晶] of “good-neighbourly relations,” [睦邻友好关系] and in advocating the “new security concept” [新型安全观] and “the new regional model of regional dialogue and cooperation” [区域对话和合作模式] in the post-Cold War world, the organisation could prevent the escalation of disagreements in Central Asia into full-scale conflicts such as the war in Iraq. The problems brewing outside the region were not to be allowed to come and disturb the uneasy peace in Central Asia. In fact, another aspect of the SCO acknowledged by Hu (2003) was the international environment of the organisation: the establishment of the organisation had “caused widespread concern in the international community” [国际社会的广泛

⁴⁸ The transfer of power after the CCP 16th Party Congress took several steps in the party congress in November 2002 and in the National People’s Congress in March 2003. It was not until September 2004, however, until Jiang Zemin relinquished his position as the chairman of the CCP Central Military Commission, giving Hu all the positions considered to belong to the leader of the CCP.

关注], a reference to the fears related to the idea of the ‘NATO of the East,’ as discussed above. From the Chinese point of view these concerns were unfounded: the members of the SCO, while not liberal democracies, respected state sovereignty and thus were much less prone to attack other countries than the US was, which had in recent years invaded both Afghanistan and Iraq.

This view of the impact of US military actions in Eurasia is shared by Professor Xu Tao (2003: 7), who sees them as a challenge to the development of the SCO. Together with the negative security implications of the US military presence, the framing of the SCO as the Asian NATO shows the threat of the nascent cooperation, being confused with the “old-fashioned, Cold War era concepts of international relations.” Thus, the SCO needed to be strengthened considerably (ibid: 13; 8–9). In fact, these early years of the SCO are marked with the natural push to construct the existing framework of cooperation into a tangible organisation capable of doing the bidding of its members. In 2003 it was not yet such an organisation, and the remainder of Hu’s (2003) speech was reserved for a call to speed up the construction of the SCO. To help in this, China was willing to provide the premises for the recently established secretariat in Beijing for free.

Of the other problems of the SCO, such as the territorial disputes in Central Asia as well as the ‘Three Evils’ of terrorism, separatism and fundamentalism, Hu spoke only little. In fact, throughout the time frame of this study, Hu never refers to the border negotiations that, nevertheless, take place continuously until 2011. The Three Evils were mentioned in the context of security cooperation, and according to Hu (2003) the “Three Forces” [三股势力] had to be eradicated in order to preserve the peace and stability in the region. The best way for this would be to cut the financing of these ‘forces’ by focusing on the prevention of drug trafficking. Thus, in this speech, Hu Jintao linked the political opposition in China and Central Asia to terrorism and the trade on narcotics.

Hu Jintao’s speech in the Tashkent summit bears strong resemblance to the one in Moscow in 2003. In his Tashkent summit speech Hu (2004) returned to the original idea of the SCO: its purpose was to “ensure lasting peace and common development of the member states” [确保成员国的持久和平和共同发展]. Thus, the

expanding and deepening of economic, cultural, and security cooperation was necessary in the “new period of development” [新的发展时期]. References to this, together with repeated references to the “trend of the times” [时代潮流] (Hu 2004; 2006; 2008b; 2010; 2011) and the complex and volatile [复杂多变] international situation in the world (Hu 2004; 2006; 2012a) are, on top of the regular patterns of his speeches, constantly present in Hu’s speeches. Combined with his references to the challenges and threats towards the SCO, the speeches paint a very bleak vision of Central Asia and the world in the early 2000s. In this world, the cooperation between China, Russia and the four Central Asian republics shines like the crystallisation of their good relations. Moreover, as times passes, China’s role in this cooperation becomes even more important.

In Hu’s (2004) Tashkent speech, anti-terrorism was more prominently present than before: terrorism must be opposed with “no double standards” [不能搞双重标准].⁴⁹ The “Three Forces” of terrorism, separatism and extremism were targeted, but, and most likely with reference to Uyghurs, according to Hu (2004) terrorism “must not be equated with specific ethnic and religious affiliations” [不能将恐怖主义与特定的民族和宗教联系等同起来]. In line with the common Chinese views on national unity, Uyghurs were not the problem of Xinjiang, but rather the separatists among them. Unfortunately, as I have described elsewhere (Naarajärvi 2012b), China’s campaigns against Uyghur separatism has hit all of the residents of Xinjiang hard, not only separatists and terrorists.

Hu further (2004) pledged to provide the other members of the organisation with preferential buyers’ credit worth of USD 900 million. While a good sum of money, preferential buyers’ credit mainly enables the purchase of goods and services from the creditor, in this case China, thus linking the economies of Central Asia with China more tightly. China’s self-interest is thus clearly visible, and there are no other signs in the speech of China portraying itself as anything more than one of the six members of the SCO. While the appointment of a senior Chinese

⁴⁹ With these “double standards” Hu Jintao referred most likely to the U.S., which e.g. the later editorial by Feng Yujun (2005) in *People’s Daily* criticised for pushing for democratization and “colour revolutions” in Central Asia in the shadow of anti-terrorism.

diplomat, Zhang Deguang, as the first secretary-general of the SCO in the new premises of the organisation were signs of China's *primus inter pares* position, in the speeches and subsequent role statements by Hu this was not yet present.

The fourth year of the SCO, 2005, brought new challenges to the nascent organisation. Political instability following parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan resulted in the 'Tulip Revolution' that ousted president Akayev, forcing him in exile in Russia in late March, thus marking the first regime change in Central Asia since the early 1990s. For an organisation like the SCO, and especially before the maturation of the cooperation, abrupt regime changes can be troublesome. Of the SCO member states only China and Russia have more or less clear and controlled systems of power transfer, and in neither of those countries has power transfer in the 2000s meant regime change: in China, power is transferred to a successor inside the Communist Party, and in Russia Vladimir Putin has found a way to stay in power by alternating between the posts of president and prime minister. Thus, when Hu Jintao mentioned stability in his SCO summit speeches, it is not unreasonable to see the term to include regime stability as well.

Less than two months later, in mid-May, more trouble was brewing in the Uzbekistani side of Fergana Valley, a known hotspot for insurgent activity only few years before. In the events that the Uzbek government calls Islamist riot, and many others peaceful protests, hundreds of people gathered in the central square of Andijan were attacked by Uzbek security forces (OSCE 2005). While the nature of both the demonstrations and the subsequent violence is unclear, the deaths of hundreds of demonstrators led to a noticeable cooling of the relations between Uzbekistan and many western countries, and e.g. the European Union established sanctions on Uzbekistan for the next several years (Castle 2009).

The 2005 summit of the SCO, which met in Astana, had a clear stance on the events: the unrest in both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were domestic affairs that should not be meddled with. According to Hu (2005a), "certain issues" [一些事情] that had recently taken place in Central Asia had caused widespread concern among the international community. This he saw as a sign of Central Asia's "increasingly prominent role in the international arena" [在国际舞台上扮演着日益重要的角色].

For China, there was no reason for concern: the countries of Central Asia were “masters of their own affairs” and had the right to choose “the development path” in accordance “with their national conditions” as well as the ability to “run things according to their own wisdom” (ibid.). In fact, for China this meant an opportunity to show how it practises what it preaches: the policy of non-interference and the democratization of international relations.

However, the events in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan put pressure on the SCO and resulted in some changes in Hu’s rhetoric: while the earlier ideas of the “Shanghai spirit” and respect for diverse civilizations were still there, the SCO had entered a “new situation” with “new tasks and challenges” [新形势, 新任务, 新挑战]. Moreover, the future of the SCO now depended on its ability to put “the consensus into action and realise the plans” [把共识化为行动, 把蓝图变成现实] (Hu 2005a). These views are echoed in the article by Xu Tao, who frames the outside world even more as a threat. According to Xu (2005b: 21), the Central Asian countries varied in their means to develop their nations and “resist” [抵御] the “impact” [*chongji*, 冲击, also “attack” or “punch”] of globalisation.

SCO’s response to this outside pressure came in the form of a declaration by the heads of states of the organisation. Since the late 2001, the United States had been using the airbases of Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan and Manas in Kyrgyzstan to support the ongoing war efforts in Afghanistan. Now the members of the SCO demanded the end of this use:

Considering the completion of the active military stage of antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan, the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation consider it necessary, that respective members of the antiterrorist coalition set a final timeline for their temporary use of the above-mentioned objects of infrastructure and stay of their military contingents on the territories of the SCO member states (Xinhua 2006).⁵⁰

While the US-led coalition was indeed making progress in Afghanistan, the reason to call for the end of the use of these bases was clearly elsewhere. Western support

⁵⁰ However, the US troops stayed at Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan until 2014.

for the first 'Colour Revolution' in Central Asia, and the widespread condemnation of the violence in Andijan were in stark contrast with the general views within the SCO and China. Islam Karimov, president of Uzbekistan, visited China only two weeks after the Andijan violence, and on the eve of his visit the issue was raised at the regular press conference at the Chinese Foreign Ministry. At this event Kong Quan, ministry spokesperson, stated that Uzbekistan was not to blame for the violence in Andijan:

As to what has happened recently in Uzbekistan, it is the internal affairs of the country in essence. We have all along firmly supported the efforts of the Uzbek Government to fight the three forces of terrorists, separatists and extremists. We also support Uzbekistan's efforts, together with those of other countries in Central Asia, to safeguard the peace and stability in the region, and their commitment to regional development and prosperity (FMPRC 2005).

By 2005, the SCO had finished its initial structure-building: the secretariat was working in Beijing, headed by a senior Chinese diplomat. Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure was established in Tashkent. The pattern of annual summits between the heads of states of the member countries was functioning: even the Acting President Kurmanbek Bakiyev of Kyrgyzstan was present in Astana, showing the continuous support of his country to the SCO. As Hasan H. Karrar (2009: 157–158) has argued, from 2005 onwards the SCO was “fully functioning,” since it had achieved the status of an observer in the United Nations, signed Memorandums of Understanding with ASEAN, and had accepted new countries as observers to the SCO summits.

In this context, the western responses to the 'issues' in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan drove a wedge between the West and the members of the SCO. By criticising state-sponsored violence in Andijan, western countries were guilty of interfering in the internal affairs of a member of the SCO. In the same vein, the critical reports by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe of the Kyrgyzstan elections preceding the 'Tulip Revolution' (OSCE 2005) could be interpreted as a breach of Kyrgyz sovereignty. Reacting to this kind of pressure was precisely what the SCO was built for, and as described in chapter 1, in accordance

with China's long-standing foreign policy doctrine of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The SCO was thus doing in practise what China had been preaching for already 50 years. The pledge of Hu Jintao (2005a) to train 1500 specialists from other SCO member states in China, together with the more favourable terms on the loans pledged a year before, can be seen as rewards for the organisation for a job well done.

As 2005 was a turning point for the SCO as an organisation, so it was one for China, too. The Chinese expectations regarding the SCO started to grow significantly, and as discussed in the following section, so were expectations regarding some of the components of China's national role conception as well. Until 2005, China had still been strongly attached to its identity as a developing country, and its push for a multilateral world order and the democratization of international relations lacked impetus. China's cultural heritage and domestic opinion had had only a little impact on the NRC of China towards Central Asia. As for the material aspects of China's NRC, China was clearly more developed and more capable than the Central Asian members of the SCO, but apart from being a financial lender, China was not portraying itself in a role much different from the other members. In fact, it was the opportunities – that is the external events outside of China – that had the biggest influence on how China saw the SCO and its own role in it. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, defined by Hu Jintao above as “changes in the international environment,” as well as the pressure towards Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan after the violence Hu described as “events,” were the variables that called for a new approach towards multilateral cooperation in Central Asia.

3.2.2. Defending Non-Interference

After the Astana summit in 2005, China started to take a stronger stance as the promoter of values and norms within the framework of the SCO. This shift was mainly a response to external pressure, characterised by the statements of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the United Kingdom's House of Commons (2006), which saw the increased linkages between Russia and China to potentially signal “the emergence of an authoritarian bloc opposed to democracy and Western values

in Eurasia,” and which found in the SCO “the potential to evolve into an alliance of authoritarian powers opposed to the West” (UKHC 2006). For China, it was precisely views like these that necessitated the existence and actions of the SCO.

Among the celebrations for the 5th anniversary of the SCO, the heads of states of the organisation held their annual summit in Shanghai in July 2006. Looking back over the five years of the SCO, Hu Jintao (2006) saw an “extraordinary path” with “remarkable achievements” that had been possible due to “geographical, historical and cultural proximity” as well as a “long tradition of friendly exchanges.” However, the “Three Forces” as well as transnational crime were still active, and therefore more strategic cooperation was needed. This cooperation necessitated “mutual respect and support for the interests and concerns of each member state” [相互尊重和支持各成员国的利益和关切], hinting that there were issues where member states did not necessarily always see eye to eye. Also Xu Tao (2006: 22) acknowledges that not all parties agreed on the nature of the SCO as there was “some disagreement on the process of promoting the regional security cooperation.”

One of these disagreements concerned the expansion of the SCO through the acceptance of new member states. Countries such as Iran, Belarus, Mongolia and Pakistan had applied for a membership, and as Karrar (2009: 162–163) has pointed out, existing members had conflicting ideas about inclusion of new member states. Another issue concerned the eviction of the U.S. military bases in Central Asia, which had taken place in Uzbekistan but not in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, Tajikistan had recently expanded the flight and fuelling rights of the U.S. planes on its territory (ibid: 164), in sharp contrast with the spirit of the 2005 summit.

As China was not able to bend its Central Asian neighbours to its will without openly going against its self-proclaimed role as the defender of state sovereignty, Hu Jintao made most of the fact that China was no longer an unimportant country. In a long paragraph of his speech, Hu (2006) described how the world was “watching China’s development and concerned of China’s future development path” [世界关注中国的发展, 关心中国未来的发展道路]. There was no reason for concern, however, as China was “unswervingly following the road of

peaceful development” [中国将坚定不移地走和平发展道路]. On top of this, China was to increase investment in the SCO beyond the loans and training programmes promised earlier (ibid.).

It is clear that a country whose development is followed by the world is not an ordinary one. Moreover, China was, through its development, “promoting world peace” [又通过自身的发展来促进世界和平] and this peaceful development was “offering great opportunities to the neighbouring countries, especially to the members of this organisation” [将首先给周边国家特别是本组织成员国带来巨大机遇] (ibid.). While Hu’s rhetoric can be seen in the context of alleviating the concerns related to the rise of China, they also mark a shift in the way Chinese leadership started to see their own country; a shift in the identity aspect of China’s national role conception from a developing country to a great power. However, this was not yet enough to facilitate a complete role change.

The next SCO summit took place in Bishkek in August 2007. The organisation itself had experienced a relatively quiet year, at least in comparison with the recent past, and there were only small – but telling – developments in the role statements by the Chinese leader. As a sign of self-assurance, China started to regularly “appreciate” the work done by the SCO and its member states (Hu 2007). Before this time, Hu Jintao had done this only in Tashkent in 2004, but from 2007 onwards phrases like “the Chinese side highly appreciates” [中方对此高度评价] (Hu 2006; 2008b; 2010) became more commonplace with only small variation.

In his usual list of “inharmonious and unstable factors in today’s world” [当今世界仍存在诸多不和谐不稳定的因素] Hu (2006) placed unilateralism and power politics before the traditional and non-traditional security threats, and the uneven distribution of the economic development fuelled by globalisation. Thus, in the eyes of Hu, the biggest threats for the SCO were coming from the outside of the region. China also continued to provide more assistance to the member states of the SCO: in order to encourage cultural linkages between China and the other members, Hu announced an SCO scholarship programme that would bring 20 students from each country to China, making a total increase of 100 students annually to the already

existing bilateral partnerships. In addition, China encouraged and provided assistance for Chinese language teaching in member states (ibid.).

As the SCO was maturing, so was Hu Jintao himself. In the 17th Party Congress of the CCP in late 2007, Hu's second term as the chairman of the CCP and as President of China was confirmed. Moreover, Hu managed to include his idea of Scientific Outlook on Development [*kexue fazhan guan*, 科学发展观] in the constitution of the CCP, a feat widely considered as a mark of Hu finally managing to stabilise his rule in the party (Saich 2015: 61). Another of Hu's favourite concepts, the 'Harmonious World' [*hexie shijie*, 和谐世界] was also included in the party constitution, even though it was not as prominently presented in Hu's report to the Party Congress (ibid.).⁵¹ However, for China's foreign policy doctrine of friendly periphery, the Harmonious World was more relevant than Scientific Outlook on Development: according to Zhao Huasheng (2007: 19), China's diplomacy in Central Asia was based on peace and development as well as on the Harmonious World. Moreover, as China enjoyed rather big [较大] influence in Central Asia, had good relations with the Central Asian republics, and as the SCO provided a platform, the prospects for promoting the idea of harmonious region in Central Asia were in place (ibid.).

Furthermore, Hu Jintao's report to the 17th Party Congress (CCP 2007) included more of the idea that China's role in the world was changing. In his speech Hu explained how China's relations with the world had undergone "historic changes" [历史性变化], and how China's future was now more closely linked with the world. In fact, Hu's emphasis on this interconnectedness went so far as to claim that the development of China was inseparable of the rest of the world, as the world's prosperity was to be inseparable from that of China (ibid.). This idea of interconnectedness becomes later visible in the two other cases of this study as well.

It was not, however, in China's interests to push its norms and values on its Central Asian neighbours. For example, Hu mentions the Harmonious World only

⁵¹ 'The Harmonious World' is yet another vague concept that aims to promote issues similar to peripheral diplomacy, i.e., tolerance between different political systems, democratisation of international relations, and multilateralism (see Blanchard 2008).

once in his SCO summit speeches, in 2010 in the context of Shanghai Expo. Zhao Huasheng (2007: 21) also notes the danger that China's intentions could be considered to portray an idea of a "Middle Kingdom" [中央之国], and suggests that caution was necessary, even if the ideas behinds Chinese policies intended well. In fact, according to Zhao (ibid: 22) "China's great power mentality" [中国的大国心态] was not necessarily bad, if it could be seen to lead to the benefit of the country's neighbours, and did not include arrogance or lack of respect. Being a great power was therefore not enough, but a country must to define its role of a great power separately through its actions, or role enactment.

So by the end of 2007, China was aware of its interconnectedness with the world, of its special importance to world economy, of its good relations with Central Asia, and of the prospects the SCO provided to increase China's influence in the region. Thus, China had experienced a shift both in the ideological and material components of its national role conception: its identity was moving, albeit slowly, towards that of a great power and it had increasingly good material capabilities to act in that role. Neither of the two other ideological components, domestic opinion and cultural heritage, was opposed to this role change. All that thus needed was an opportunity, the other material component of national role conception.

The relations between Russia and the former Soviet state of Georgia had been worsening for years, and the process culminated in a short war in August 2008. Although the conflict itself was contained in a small area and officially lasted only for a few days, it had wider ramifications for all members of the SCO. For the Central Asian republics it was a reminder of Russia's willingness and capability to protect its interests within the framework of the former Soviet Union, even with military means if necessary. For China, the situation where an outside power assists a separatist region to break away from a sovereign state, as happened with Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Russian help, was a scenario too close to what China has been claiming to be happening with Taiwan and the United States. On the other hand, the view that Russia was merely responding to the eastern enlargement of NATO was not uncommon in China (see e.g. Tang, Y. 2008: 23), and the Sino-

Russian relations were too important to be sacrificed for the sake of principles. Thus, a moderate response was in order.

When the SCO summit in Dushanbe in late August 2008 began, it had been only days since Russia had acknowledged the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the organisation had to adopt a stance regarding the conflict. In this context, Hu Jintao's (2008b) way of emphasizing sovereignty and independence, the "major core issues of security" [安全的重大核心问], can be interpreted as a snub towards Russia. Moreover, while the SCO has no clause for collective security, according to Hu the members of the SCO would "not hesitate to lend a helping hand in case of serious difficulties" [在有关成员国遇到严重困难时毫不犹豫地伸出援手] (ibid.). If considered in the context of the SCO, this could be seen as a reference to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 2005, but spoken only few days after the end of hostilities between Russia and Georgia, the more current implications of Hu's speech were clear: Russia should not behave in the same way towards the former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

The SCO as a whole decided to strike a balance between supporting Russia as a member state, while not condoning its actions in Georgia directly. In the 'Dushanbe Declaration' of the SCO, the leaders of the SCO

express their deep concern in connection with the recent tension around the issue of South Ossetia, and call on the relevant parties to resolve existing problems in a peaceful way through dialogue, to make efforts for reconciliation and facilitation of negotiations. The member states of the SCO welcome the approval on 12 August 2008 in Moscow of the six principles of settling the conflict in South Ossetia, and support the active role of Russia in promoting peace and cooperation in the region (SCO 2008).

Apart from Russia, so far none of the SCO member states have recognised the independence of Abkhazia or South Ossetia. According to Hu (2008b) "major changes and adjustments" were taking place in the world, and to solve the problems in the region the members of the SCO needed to "join together for self-strengthening" [联合自强]. In addition, for the first time Hu Jintao made a clear

reference to China's particular position within the SCO: explaining how the SCO had not only members that were "major economies" [经济大国] and "major food/grain producers" [产粮大国], but also countries "rich in energy resources" [能源资源富集国] and countries with "massive consumer markets" [巨大消费市场] (ibid.). What Hu left unsaid, but what was clear to everybody listening, was that China, and only China, was all of those.⁵²

Another 'adjustment' taking place in the world in 2008 was the international financial crisis of 2007–2008. As Gottwald and Duggan (2011: 242–246; 249–250) have explained, amidst the global financial crisis China, after re-examining the internal and external expectations towards itself, changed its policy and in the end had a major impact in mitigating the effects of the crisis, and in doing so took a step in the process of "hesitant adaptation" into a new, global and more influential role. During the Dushanbe summit of 2008 this policy change of China was not yet complete, and while Hu (2008b) did call for a deeper economic cooperation within the organisation to "guard against the impact of international economic fluctuations" [防范国际经济波动冲击], and reminded the audience of the interconnectedness between China's development and the rest of the world by referring to the "inseparability of China and the world's prosperity and stability" [世界繁荣稳定也离不开中国], it was not until later that China felt comfortable in announcing its new, stronger role more openly.

During the time frame of roughly four years between 2005 and 2009, China's national role conception towards Central Asia was taking clear steps towards the role of a great power. On the level of identity, the changing rhetoric of Hu Jintao started to emphasise the importance of China not only for the SCO, but for the whole world. This change did not meet with opposition from other ego aspects in China, as the Chinese cultural heritage underlines the peaceful nature of China, and the Chinese public had no strong feelings towards the Central Asian republics. On the material side, China increased its support to the SCO and its

⁵² While China has been a net importer of energy since the early 1990s and is today increasingly dependent on agricultural imports (see Duggan and Naarajärvi 2015), it is still a major producer of both energy and food.

Central Asian members. China also took up the opportunities that rose in its political environment, steering the SCO towards its own interests without going openly against the other members. In fact, these few years show a considerable steepening in China's learning curve towards the role of a great power, and it did not take long until China was ready to acknowledge this openly.

3.2.3. Taking the Role of a Great Power

When the heads of the SCO member states met the next time, the summit took place in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in June 2009. The international financial crisis and China's response to it took up a major share of Hu's speech this year, starting with the title: "Join Hands to Deal with the International Financial Crisis and Build a Harmonious and Beautiful Future Together" [携手应对国际金融危机 共同创造和谐美好未来] (Hu 2009). The inclusion of harmony, which appeared in the context of CCP Party Congress less than two years before, is at this point hardly a coincidence but rather a way for Hu to promote his views, now part of the CCP canon. Moreover, the concreteness of the title is in stark contrast with Hu's earlier speeches, usually calling for generalities such as more cooperation, peaceful development or a better tomorrow.

When claiming that the world was going through "complex and profound changes" [复杂深刻变化], Hu (ibid.) once more emphasises the international financial crisis, still "spreading and deepening" [特别是国际金融危机仍在蔓延深化] and having an increasingly significant impact on the global economy as well as causing "enormous challenges to social stability" [社会稳定面临巨大挑战]. The link between economic growth and social stability is common in the rhetoric of the Chinese Communist Party and it has been used (often justifiably) to legitimise the rule of the CCP since the beginning. However, this time Hu decided to emphasise China's response to this regional and global challenge:

Faced with the severe international financial crisis, China swiftly adopted a proactive fiscal policy and a moderately loose monetary policy, formed to further expand domestic demand and promote a stable and rapid

economic development package, and vigorously expand the domestic market, especially the rural market, large-scale industrial adjustment and revitalization plan, to vigorously promote scientific and technological innovation and transformation, significantly raise the level of social security, and strengthen energy conservation and environmental protection. Now, these measures have achieved initial results, showing positive signs. Although the adverse effects of the international financial crisis on China's economy continues to show, the basic situation and the long-term trend for the better development of China's economy have not changed. China's economy has maintained the steady and rapid development of the member states, and will have a positive impact on the economy of the region and the world.

[面对罕见的国际金融危机, 中国果断实施积极的财政政策和适度宽松的货币政策, 形成进一步扩大内需, 促进经济平稳较快发展的一揽子计划, 大力拓展国内市场 特别是农村市场, 大范围实施产业调整振兴规划, 大力推进科技创新和技术改造, 大幅度提高社会保障水平, 大力加强节能减排和生态环境保护。现在, 这些措施已 取得初步成效, 呈现出积极迹象。虽然国际金融危机对中国经济的不利影响继续显现, 但中国经济发展的基本态势和长期向好趋势没有改变。中国经济保持平稳较快 发展对成员国, 区域经济乃至世界经济都会有积极影响] (Hu 2009).

For China, using economic and financial measures for political gains is nothing new: as discussed in the beginning of this chapter, this was often the logic behind the traditional tributary relations between the imperial China and its neighbours. In recent times, the Chinese response to the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 has been seen as a part of its peripheral diplomacy: that by not devaluating its currency, China eased the situation of many of its neighbouring countries at the expense of its own economic growth. This has been widely considered as a policy which enhanced China's public image significantly (Moore and Yang 2001: 202–229, esp. 220–222). What is crucial here is that the Chinese leadership no longer had any reason to follow the advice of Deng Xiaoping and hide their capabilities: a political

opportunity had presented itself, and China was making use of that opportunity and being open about it, as a great power does.

At this time, the Chinese academia had already for a while been discussing China's potential as a great power. For example, according to Xu Jian (2008: 5), even though there were worrying trends in the international environment in the short-term, China's long-term prospects were good: the rise of the developing countries was pushing for the democratisation of international relations, a common theme in the speeches of Hu Jintao. Moreover, both the competition and the interdependence caused by economic globalisation were in the interests of China, which had to remember to hold onto some principles amidst its own increasing power: national unity, especially regarding the Taiwan issue had to be upheld without increasing the potential for conflict with the United States. In addition, the development of China's international position had to be balanced with increasing international responsibilities, meaning that China had to keep in mind the limitations, fairness and efficiency in its international dealings (*ibid.*). This discussion of the limitations of China's great power status and role show that the issue had become present, instead of being something in the far future.

In essence, Xu's article defines the parameters of China's great power role: China was aiming to increase its influence carefully while not compromising on core issues of sovereignty and unity; it should keep in mind its own path of development and thus pay special attention to the needs of the developing countries in the vein of the 'common but differentiated responsibilities' familiar from the Kyoto Protocol; and it should encourage each and every country to participate responsibly by striking a balance between the responsibilities, rights and interests involved in the international issues (*ibid.*). China was ready to assume the role of a great power, but it was not going to act unilaterally except in 'core' issues. The willingness to act when those were at stake soon became visible in the case of the South China Sea (see chapter 4).

2009–2010 gave China a reminder of its limitations, great power or not. In July 2009, only a couple of weeks after the SCO summit in Yekaterinburg, the tensions between the Uyghurs and the Han-Chinese in Xinjiang escalated to a string

of riots leaving – according to official figures – nearly 200 people dead and resulting in over 30 death sentences. The Chinese government was quick to blame the exiled Uyghur activists and their World Uyghur Congress for inciting the violence, and some commentators even saw western ideological and geopolitical influence behind the violence (Xinhua 2009; Pan and Zhao 2009: 21). The SCO issued a statement in line with the reaction of the organisation after the violence in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 2005: Xinjiang was part of China and events within Xinjiang were therefore part of China’s “internal affairs” (CCTV 2009).

In the spring of 2010 Kyrgyzstan experienced another ‘revolution,’ this time ousting President Bakiyev who had been ruling the country since the ‘Tulip Revolution’ of 2005. However, this time the revolution was followed by increasing violence especially in southern Kyrgyzstan where there was a sizable minority of Uzbeks. With the exception of a short and limited intervention by Uzbek security forces, the neighbouring countries were unable and even unwilling to pacify the situation which in the end saw hundreds of casualties, almost all them of Uzbek ethnicity (ICG 2012).

Even in the light of these casualties, China’s response to the two incidents was in accordance with its earlier policies and the parameters of the great power role it had assumed. In the SCO summit of 2010, taking place in Tashkent in June, simultaneously with the worst period of violence in Kyrgyz city of Osh, Hu Jintao (2010) called for more cooperation in anti-terrorism. He also reminded his audience of the importance of cooperation in the “core interests” [核心利益] of sovereignty, security and development. In the next sentence Hu hoped [希望] the situation in Kyrgyzstan to stabilise and promised, together with the other members of the SCO, to provide Kyrgyzstan “assistance within its capacity” [力所能及的帮助] (ibid.).

However, China was in a position to intervene much more directly to stop the violence in southern Kyrgyzstan, had it wanted to. Due to the mountainous territory of Kyrgyzstan, the southern parts of the country are easier to access from China’s Xinjiang than from the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek. Moreover, less than a year from the Urumqi riots, China had plenty of troops stationed in the predominantly Uyghur territory of southern Xinjiang, close to Kyrgyz borders. But

such an intervention would have been a clear breach of sovereignty of Kyrgyzstan, as the Kyrgyz interim government had not asked for the Chinese to step in.

The violence in southern Kyrgyzstan has proved to be an event that has caused some discussion among the Chinese academia about China's role in such events. In an article published in a journal less influential than he would normally use (perhaps due to the sensitivity of the issue), Zhao Huasheng (2011) discusses of the concepts of "non-interference" [不干涉内政] and "constructive intervention" [建设性介入]. According to Zhao, China should define parameters that would allow it to "constructively" intervene in the internal affairs of others countries, and proposes a set of parameters of his own for this purpose. Even though he acknowledges the difficulties in a policy shift of such magnitude, Zhao nevertheless ponders China's "role" [角色] in Central Asian politics: that due to its proximity and interests in the region, China should not ignore its influence in Central Asia anymore (ibid: 27).⁵³

Some Chinese academics saw the Kyrgyz revolution of 2010 in a wider, international context. Tianjin-based scholars Yang Lei (Nankai University) and Kong Chunyu (China Civil Aviation University), call the April 2010 uprising in Bishkek "a coup" [政变] (Yang and Kong 2010: 49), and see the regime change in the context of the U.S. trying to gradually bring the Central Asian republics into an "international organisation" under U.S. control (such as Partnership for Peace) in order to prevent the expansion of power of non-US allies in the area, i.e. China. In addition, they see increasing cooperation between the U.S. and Russia over issues such as Afghanistan and Iran, while the existing disagreements between the two would still hinder the Obama administration's attempts for 'Russian Reset' (ibid: 50).⁵⁴ This geopolitical game between Russia and the United States and its further implications for China were of interest to Yang Lei, who saw that the potential

⁵³ After 2011, "constructive intervention" is mentioned in around 140 articles published in Chinese academic journals (CAJ 2016), often in context of peripheral security, a sign of a possible policy shift in the wake of the role change discussed here.

⁵⁴ 'Russian Reset' refers to the reset button gifted by the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in 2009, as a symbol of renewed relations between the two countries.

warming up of the relations between the two could “curb the growing influence of China in Central Asia” (Yang 2010: 33), and that Russia would hold to its position of “hidden hegemon” [隐形霸主] also in the long run (ibid: 36).

These views on the changing role of China in Central Asia and on the potential geopolitical shifts between Russia and the United States around 2009–2011 are formed in the context of China’s uncertainty as to how to enact its new role as a great power, but they also occur during the little ice age in the relations between China and Russia. In February 2009 Russian authorities fired on a Chinese cargo ship, causing the death of seven Chinese and one Indonesian sailor, and prompting a “strongly-worded protest” from the Chinese Foreign Ministry (BBC 2009). While the incident had no further direct consequences on the relations between China and Russia, it was one more piece in the puzzle depicting China’s changing self-understanding as well as the way it started to see its neighbours more from the point of view of a player rather than that of a victim.

In the Astana summit of the SCO, Hu Jintao (2011) reminded the other member states of the preferential buyer’s loans provided by China, worth USD 12 billion. In the context of Central Asia this was a handsome figure, far above the aid from e.g. the European Union.⁵⁵ Moreover, and again, there were major changes in the world, and the use of “cooperation to promote security and to seek development has become the broad consensus of the international community” [以合作促安全, 谋发展成为国际社会广泛共识]. There were still, according to Hu, international and regional hotspots as well as new conflicts making the safeguarding of world peace “more arduous.” This should be reflected in the further development of the SCO, and further focus was needed on good-neighbourly friendship (and paying attention to the core interests of the members) as well as on SCO’s capability to stand against “real threats” [现实威胁] was needed. Doing the latter, however, it was important to respect national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and the “will of the people in each country” [各国人民意愿]. Thus, even in its great power role

⁵⁵ The official EU development assistance to Central Asia (including also Turkmenistan with 14.4% share) was less than one billion USD in 2007–2013 (ECA 2013: 9–10).

China was committed to the policy of non-interference, and thus differed from the established great powers of the world.

The Beijing summit of the SCO in June 2012 was to be the last for Hu Jintao, who stepped down from his official positions in the leadership of China in the following November–March. Hu’s parting gift to the organisation was in line with China’s new self-understanding of being a great power: on top of another batch of 1500 specialists to be trained in China during the following three years, Hu announced an additional 30,000 government scholarships for the citizens of the SCO member states to study in China. In addition, China would invite 10,000 Confucius Institute students and teachers to be trained in China. Finally, China was to provide the member states of the SCO additional loans worth of USD 10 billion (Hu 2012a).

Continuing with the emphasis on the positive, Hu stated that the SCO had been able to deal successfully with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the international financial crisis, and the turbulence in the Middle East. Continuing such developments, wanted the SCO to become “a harmonious home of peaceful relations” [和谐和睦的家园]. And as always, Hu made the Chinese view of sovereignty and non-interference very clear:

The people of all countries in the region should make their own decisions about their internal affairs. We are firmly opposed to any excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of the member states, and firmly support the efforts to safeguard the national sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, security and stability of each country.

[本地区各国内部事务应该由各国人民自己作主, 我们坚决反对以任何借口干涉成员国内政, 坚定支持各国为维护主权独立, 领土完整, 安全稳定所作的努力] (Hu 2012a).

Hu’s views on non-interference are echoed in an article by Yang Lei in 2012. According to Yang, the geopolitical competition between Russia and the US, together with the authoritarian rule especially in the smaller Central Asian republics that are poor and riddled with political instability, could further destabilise the

whole region (Yang 2012: 21). However, with regard to governance, it is not the authoritarianism *per se* that Yang sees as causing problems, as he suggests that the authoritarian Central Asian regimes in fact maintain political stability (ibid). Therefore, and in contrast with China, it must have been the lack of controlled succession that was the cause of Yang's concern: in 2012, the Chinese Communist Party was holding its 18th Party Congress and executing the third post-Cold War power transfer in China, and second that took place in an organised and pre-planned manner. As was fitting to China's new status as a great power, it had managed to come up with a stable and working procedure to a common problem of authoritarian regimes: power succession.

Therefore, and in accordance with China's new aspirations and role, Hu Jintao was looking forward. Foreshadowing the One Belt, One Road initiative published in 2013 by Hu's successor Xi Jinping, Hu (2012a) envisions building the SCO into the driving economic force across Eurasia. According to him, SCO members should build railways, highways, telecommunications, power grids etc. to give the "ancient Silk Road a new meaning" [为古老的“丝绸之路”赋予新的内涵] (ibid.). Moreover, a new development bank, food security cooperation mechanism, seed banks, energy club and many other initiatives were to be established. To take Hu's words at the face value, the SCO, with the support of China, was to take off on a grand scale.

During the last three to four years in his post as the highest decision-maker in China, Hu was no longer holding back the development of China into its new international role. Both the ideational and national components of a great power role are clearly visible in his speeches. The identity of a great power, already hinted at earlier, is more prominent. The cultural heritage of historical peaceful relations between China and Central Asia stay unchanged. The Chinese domestic audience has no strong opinion on how the relations with Central Asia should be handled and therefore offers no opposition either. As to opportunities, especially the Kyrgyz revolution of 2010 made Chinese academics rethink China's policies, but nothing changed on the surface of politics. The biggest change took place with regard to the material capabilities of China: the 2012 financial pledges, unprecedented in scale,

were clearly acts of role enactment, where a great power was spreading well-being to its surroundings. The ideational shift into the role conception of a great power had taken China a long time, culminating in the international financial crisis of 2007–2008. But once that shift had taken place, the capabilities were quick to follow.

3.3. Conclusions: Learning the Role of a Great Power

In the 1990s, when negotiating the boundary settlements with the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, China was still very deeply in its role of a developing country. Especially in economic terms, and even more when looked at per capita, it lagged far behind the industrialised western countries. In 1991, China's (nominal) GDP was around USD 400bn, or less than USD 400 per capita. In fact, in per capita figures China was below its Central Asian neighbours.⁵⁶ In the 2010s, Kazakhstan, with its massive energy resources, has managed to keep abreast of China's economy per capita, but the phenomenal growth of China's economy, starting already in the late 1970s and bringing it to breathe down the neck of the United States in the 2010s, means that today China is in a category of its own when compared to its Central Asian neighbours.

Should one be interested in examining China's foreign policy using traditional role theory, Hu Jintao's speeches at the summits of the SCO would give a long list of China's role statements: collaboration, cooperation and development dominate each one of the speeches, followed by peace and stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as friendship and good-neighbourliness. This is hardly surprising, as these concepts are the basis of not only China's foreign, but also domestic policies. China's development model, linking economic development with peace and stability and emphasising non-interference in others' internal affairs is well-known to all students of China. Thus, the fact that China's cooperation with Central Asia is based on these concepts and values surprises no one. Moreover, in terms of non-interference, in Central Asia China has more or less practised what it

⁵⁶ All the data in here is from World Bank Database: <http://data.worldbank.org/>

has preached, sometimes to the chagrin of the western powers pushing for the democratisation of the region.

Any role of a great power acceptable to China could not be opposed to the ideas, norms and values listed above: China's great power role cannot be too far from its previous foreign policy doctrine. Moreover, the process leading to a great power role cannot be traced by counting the frequency of role statements such as "China will unswervingly pursue an independent foreign policy of peace" (Hu 2003; 2005a) or how many times China will uphold "good-neighbourly" relations (Hu 2003; 2004; 2006; 2007; 2008b; 2011). In addition, since Hu Jintao never refers to China his speeches as a 'great power' (大国),⁵⁷ such research would not yield much in terms of results on great power roles. However, linking the more interpretative role statements of Hu Jintao with Chinese foreign policy, or role enactment, of the same era, and with the contemporary political context in Central Asia, makes it possible to trace China's role change.

First, it was important to look into the potentially problematic alter expectations to China's great power role. As explained in chapter 2, roles are "social positions ... that are constituted by ego and alter expectations reading the purpose of an actor in an organised group" (Harnisch 2011: 8). Thus, the role of China in the SCO is dependent on not only China, but also on the other members of the "organised group" that is the SCO. At the outset, there was concern: the statement by Kazakhstan's president Nazarbayev about the "heavy legacy" of border issues between China and his country, described above, probably reflected the views of the other, even smaller neighbours of China as well. It would therefore have been of utmost importance for China to reassure Central Asia of its benign intentions.

Throughout the last 25 years China has been extremely careful in its Central Asian policy. Adopting the peripheral diplomacy helped a lot, as did the Shanghai Five Forum and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Moreover, as discussed earlier in this chapter, China's prudent and compromising approach to the territorial

⁵⁷ The only exception to this is Hu's (2008) remark on how the organisation has members that are "major economies/economic powers" and "major grain-producers" (经济大国, 产粮大国). However, in this context the word *Daguo* does not necessarily refer to a great power, but instead a "big country."

disputes (while not giving in completely) has made it easier for the smaller countries in Central Asia to accept the policies of their great neighbour. In fact, it seems that the Central Asian countries have largely accepted the Chinese role of a great power, especially in the framework of the SCO. They have experienced no loss of sovereignty – Hu Jintao refers repeatedly to ‘equality’ between the members of the SCO – and the economic benefits from China’s role change have been significant for them.

For Central Asian republics the idea of China as a great power is easy to accept for many reasons. Security-wise, it gave them a third option between the old Russian influence and the growing US influence in the 1990s and early 2000s. Moreover, China gave them actual help in cracking down on dissidence and in regime support. Economically, Chinese aid has been very strong, and continues to be so to date. Moreover, China’s great power role mostly takes nothing away from e.g. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as they are poor, small and weak neighbours of China. As such, their best option has often been to appeal to China’s self-identity as a great power, almost in a manner of our perception of the old *tianxia* system or, as described by Chiung-chiu Huang and Chih-yu Shih (2014) in the context of China-North Korea and China-Myanmar, of *relational security*. This has seemingly worked, as in the case of territorial disputes China did retreat from its original demands.

Subsequently, in the framework of the SCO, the main tool for Chinese Central Asian policy in the Hu Jintao era, China has had no reason to emphasise the rest of its complex role set (developing country, victim of imperialism, economic powerhouse as well as a great power), but has focused on sending a strong but benign picture of itself to its Central Asian neighbours. Markedly, in his speeches at the SCO summits Hu Jintao never refers to China as a developing country [发展中国家], something that Wen Jiabao does at the ASEAN summit as lately as in 2011, as described in the following chapter. Moreover, China’s leading role in the SCO and later the role of a great power have led to tangible benefits for other members. China’s willingness to compromise in the territorial disputes is one, followed by economic assistance, regime support and increased regional stability. As I have

argued elsewhere, the SCO has increased the Central Asian republics' possibilities for identifying as subjects instead of mere objects, even while there is obvious challenges to much further regionalization in the area (Naarajärvi 2012: 124). In sum, China's great power role does not meet much resistance from the Central Asian republics.

Russia, on the other hand, is a more complicated issue. Central Asia, as a former region of the Soviet Union, has been seen as a backyard of Russia by many. Thus, China's increased interest in the region, realised with the help of the considerable increase in its national power, has probably caused concern in Moscow as well. However, in the 1990s Russia was itself very weak due to the collapse of the national economy, its constitutional problems, and the First Chechen War. After the stabilisation of Russia, Central Asia became a focus of increased U.S. interest due to the war in Afghanistan that began in late 2001. And for Russia, China was in any case a much more preferable regional power than the U.S.

However, it was probably not in Moscow's plans to see China overtake Russia in influence in Central Asia. But this is what seems to have happened, and, as argued by Bobo Lo, it happened around the same time as the realization of China's great power role, described in this chapter. According to Lo (2008: 151–153), a “growing asymmetry” in Sino-Russian relations was taking place not only as regards energy and geopolitics, but also more generally from the perspective of “international political capital.” At the same time, the SCO denied Russia its wholehearted support for Russia's war in Georgia, and only two years later Russia turned down the requests of the interim Kyrgyz government for it to intervene in the violence in Osh: something that must have influenced the image of Russia among the Central Asian republics.

Finally, to be seen as more powerful in one way or another must have had a tremendous impact on China's identity as a great power. Seeing itself as the successor for the Soviet Union, Russia had never relinquished its great power status, and has often tried to enact a role that it considers suitable for such status. Thus, for China to exceed Russia and have that acknowledged by others would be an important step on the path towards becoming a great power. And in the case of the

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as a forum where the two have shared the position of *primus inter pares*, the power shift is even more visible and significant, as the two have clearly stood out among the other members.

In Central Asia, China *learned* to be a great power. As Harnisch (2011: 10–11) explains, role learning takes place when an actor's experiences lead to a change in the belief in one's capabilities. As the (Chinese) role of a great power did not meet opposing alter expectations, it was easy to assume the new role in subsequent foreign policy, including concessions in territorial disputes and economic assistance. In the case of China, there is a clear change in the degree of belief in the country's own capabilities, a change necessary for it to assume this role of a great power. This learning process was a very successful one: China managed to incorporate its ego expectations with the alter expectations of the Central Asian republics, a process which took place simultaneously with significantly increased belief in China's own capabilities in the speech acts of its highest decision-maker, Hu Jintao. Moreover, this new role of a great power met no opposition from the domestic, popular opinion and was in accordance with China's historical understanding of itself. And finally, it was created as a response to the opportunities arising both globally and from within the framework of the SCO.

The fact that China learned this role through its cooperation in the framework of the SCO had a major impact on the way the role itself was shaped, and on the characteristics of the role itself. As discussed earlier in this chapter, China's policies within the SCO focused on the issues that could be developed. As will be discussed later in this study, this resonates well with China's attempts to distance the problematic issues on the South China Sea from its cooperation with the ASEAN member states, and with the way China has called for the 'shelving' of its problems with Japan. Moreover, using the combination of security, stability and cooperation for economic development is paramount in China's foreign policy, and therefore in the work of the SCO and in the great power role the country developed for itself. Furthermore, the other side of the deal, regime stability and non-interference in others' internal affairs has the same roots. And finally, on the

broader stage of international politics, China's quest for a multipolar world order is included in the package as well.

All in all, just like China's Central Asia policy of "amicable, secure and prosperous neighbourhood" [友邻, 安邻, 富邻] has been a success (Zhao 2007: 22), so was China's role learning of a great power role suitable for both the ego expectations of China as well as the alter expectations of the Central Asian republics. Unfortunately for China, it has not been able to repeat this in the same extent elsewhere in its near-abroad, in Southeast Asia or with Japan.

4. ADAPTING THE ROLE OF A GREAT POWER: CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

The second case of this study discusses China's role change in Southeast Asia during the same time frame as the previous chapter, 2002–2012. While tracing the process of China's great power role development in Southeast Asia, I aim to compare these developments to the process of role learning China experienced in Central Asia. As a region, Southeast Asia has, from the Chinese point of view, both similarities to and differences from Central Asia that make it a good case in the context of my research on China's national role conceptions and subsequent foreign policy roles.

In many ways, China's contacts towards Southeast Asia are, if not longer, at least stronger and more multi-faceted than is the case with Central Asia. For example, many countries of Southeast Asia were an integral part of the tributary system of imperial China, giving them a long history of continuous contact with China before the decline of the Chinese empire.⁵⁸ While the memories of this relationship probably linger in both China and in Southeast Asia, it does not mean that these memories are the same on both sides. Another feature of Southeast Asia, giving it additional importance in the eyes of the Chinese state, is the high number of ethnic Chinese in the region. These issues will be discussed in the first part of this chapter.

As with Central Asia, China's peripheral diplomacy has been very active in Southeast Asia, promoting multilateralism and regional cooperation. Here, the main organisation for this activity is ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. As the majority of my research in this chapter discusses the role statements by the Chinese leaders, mainly Premier Wen Jiabao, in the summits of ASEAN+3 and ASEAN-China cooperation, it is necessary to examine the organisation itself as

⁵⁸ As discussed in chapter 3.1, the nature of this tributary system is debated still today. In the context of this study, the idea of tributary relations both as a component of China's national role conception and as the alter expectations of China's significant others matter more than the reality during imperial China.

well as the changed Chinese policies and views regarding it. Hence, after addressing China's historical roles towards Southeast Asia and the overseas Chinese, I look into the relationship between China and ASEAN.

Next, I describe shortly the ongoing maritime territorial disputes between the People's Republic of China and several countries in Southeast Asia. While this study is not about China's territorial disputes *per se*, they provide in each of my cases a useful background and frame for the analysis of China's role change. I argue that in Southeast Asia China has actively separated the issues of regional economic integration and territorial disputes in order to achieve a more coherent role, thus solving a potential role conflict rising from negative alter expectations towards China's great power role.⁵⁹ The extremely complicated mixture of territorial disputes on the South China Sea are the main reason of this, and therefore it is worthwhile to examine briefly the complexity of the territorial disputes in the region.

In the main part of this chapter I will focus on the development of the Chinese national role conceptions as well as China's foreign policy roles towards the Southeast Asian nations, using the frameworks of China's ASEAN cooperation as well as China's territorial disputes to guide my analysis. As in the previous chapter, the emphasis will be on the analysis of statements by the Chinese leaders, supported by Chinese academic views and compared to China's actual actions in Southeast Asia. Only this time, instead of Hu Jintao, it is the Premier Wen Jiabao, responsible for economic issues, whose role statements are used to trace the process of China's role change. In the end of the chapter I will provide conclusions, discussing the characteristics of China's role change in Southeast Asia.

When comparing Central and Southeast Asia from the point of view of the People's Republic of China, some similarities arise immediately. Both regions have been part of China's "periphery" for hundreds, if not thousands of years. Both have served as important trading routes for Chinese imports and exports. Both have carried new ideas and ideologies to China, including religions such as Buddhism

⁵⁹ As a country's national role conceptions and subsequent roles are issue-specific (see chapter 2.4.2), this does not create a conflict in the eyes of the actor, while of course the significant others (in this case ASEAN or some of its members), might see this differently.

and Islam. Both have also been used as routes for invading forces, be they Arabs, Mongols or Europeans. Lately, both have also been important focus areas in China's peripheral diplomacy, which has been seen mostly as an initial success (Lanteigne 2016: 156).

However, differences between Central and Southeast Asia for the Chinese state are numerous, too. Southeast Asia is a much more diverse region in terms of culture, economics and politics than the Eurasian heartland. While democratisation has taken on there more readily than in the authoritarian Central Asia, the Southeast Asian nations have enjoyed independence in other forms of governance, too, and also for much longer than the Central Asian republics. In the absence of external rule, there have also been more inter-state conflicts in Southeast Asia, and the region is also much more firmly a part of the U.S. global security pattern than Central Asia is.

Perhaps most importantly, and reflecting the concept of the 'Pacific Century',⁶⁰ today's Southeast Asia is, in terms of geo-economics, one of the most strategic regions in the contemporary world. Not only do the ASEAN member states together count as the world's 7th largest economy with solid development prospects (Vinayak, Thompson and Tonby 2014), but Southeast Asia is also the thoroughfare for a large share of the world trade that originates outside the region, and as a route out, it is of utmost importance not only to China, but also to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, all of them being major manufacturing centres.⁶¹

Lastly, and as will be discussed next in more detail, Southeast Asia has been much closer to China for a much longer time in terms of geography, culture, politics and economics than Central Asia. This means that the Chinese foreign policy roles towards Southeast Asia have been much more complex than has been the case with Central Asia.

⁶⁰ The term "Pacific Century" refers to the rising importance of the Pacific Rim, or Asia-Pacific, in economic, and subsequently political, terms in the 21st century.

⁶¹ The importance of both Central and Southeast Asia for Chinese economy became clearly visible in the Belt and Road initiative, announced in 2013, in which both of these regions have prominent position. Nevertheless, the maritime trade routes through Southeast Asia are far more important for China than those in landlocked Central Asia.

4.1. China's Historical Roles towards Southeast Asia

Both due to China's internal orientation, with most of its population and centres of political and economic power located in the eastern, maritime China, and the connections offered by China's eastern seafront, Southeast Asia has always been much closer to China than Central Asia has been. This trend was strengthened due to the repeated retreats of Chinese dynasties towards the east and south during the wars against advancing continental enemies, for example during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279). Moreover, unlike in the case of the expansive (and often assertive) tribes of Central Asia causing the collapse of numerous dynasties, Southeast Asia was not usually considered a direction of a threat to China, and thus it was a better fit for the *tianxia* (All Under Heaven) worldview, which had China as the centre of the world.

Especially since the beginning of Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), Southeast Asia was considered a subservient region to China. The Yongle Emperor, having reluctantly acknowledged the ruler of the Timurid Empire as his equal (as described in the previous chapter), sent almost fifty missions to Southeast Asia in order to “persuade all countries to submit to China” (Wang 1970: 55). While this ‘submission’ in the context of tributary system rarely meant actual Chinese rule, from the point of view of the Chinese Emperor one could easily have distinguished between Central and Southeast Asia: in the case of the latter, China was actively participating in the mutual wars and disputes of countries like Assam, Cambodia, Siam, Java, Brunei and Malacca (ibid: 54–60), whereas in Central Asia the influence of the ‘Celestial Empire’ was much more limited.

Thus, it is hardly exaggerated to call China's historical role towards Southeast Asia as one of a regional hegemon. While the actual enactment of this role, that is China's foreign policy, was naturally more complicated and depended greatly on China's capabilities to exert power over the region, there is little reason to doubt the underlying national role conception itself. Regardless of whether China was actually able to send missions of governance or trade to Southeast Asia, the

image of the area as a part of the *tianxia* world order was strong in premodern China, making the role that of one of *the* great powers of the time.⁶²

Naturally, this role of a hegemon was not a permanent one and especially with the arrival of the western colonial powers it weakened considerably, as the Chinese influence was pushed back by various means, including military conflicts like the Opium Wars of the 1840s and 1850s as well as the Sino-French War in the present-day Vietnam in the 1880s. Continuous decline of the imperial power, followed by the era of warlords and civil wars after the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 (which had overthrown the Qing Dynasty), meant that China had to adjust its earlier role concept of a regional hegemon both in the ideational and the material sense: for decades, China was unable to enact in any kind of active role beyond its borders towards Southeast Asia, a trend that continued until the end of the WWII and the communist revolution of 1949.⁶³

Later, an unproclaimed role of the People's Republic of China, where Southeast Asia served an important position, was the 'leader of the developing world', as discussed in chapter 1.2.1 of this study. While the outreach of China's Three Worlds Theory was global, the Bandung conference of 1955 as well as the Non-Aligned Movement, established in early 1960s and with President Sukarno of Indonesia as one of the founders were important aspects of it and closely linked to Southeast Asia. This leading role, set up during the 20th century, is something that China has clearly been clinging to also during the 21st, as has become clear not only in Wen Jiabao's statements regarding the economic development of Southeast Asia (as discussed in this chapter), but it has also become visible in China's contemporary roles towards e.g. Africa (Duggan and Naarajärvi 2015).

As discussed in the chapter 1.2, in the post-Mao era China's foreign policy roles as well as the role enactment changed significantly. In the more pragmatic era

⁶² One can of course question the suitability of the notion of a great power in the context of premodern world that had no global power setting. Also, see Wang (1970: 60–61) for an explanation how it was possible for Chinese to retain the concept of superiority while reality was speaking against it.

⁶³ In fact, during this era China experienced an enormous role change as not only did its own NRC change, but so did the alter expectations of its significant others in the region, those having changed to western colonial powers.

of “reform and opening” China needed to attract vast amounts of foreign direct investments, and a natural source for these were the then already industrialised East and Southeast Asian ‘Tigers.’ To achieve investments, it was no longer possible to push for revolutions: it was time to, for example, “advocate peaceful coexistence,” and be a “good friend” and a “good neighbour” (Canivet and Beylerian 1997: 201–202). This friend-seeking culminated in the peripheral (*zhoubian*) diplomacy starting in the mid-1990s, and the continuous reform era of China has been marked with increased economic contacts with the rest of the world. In fact, China’s great power role of the 2000s, with its emphasis on economic cooperation, can be seen almost as a direct continuum of this.

Since the 19th century there has been one additional element tying China and its Southeast neighbours closer together: the large number of ethnic Chinese living outside of China, often known as “overseas Chinese” [*huaqiao*, 华侨 or *huaren*, 华人].⁶⁴ Unlike in Central Asia, or in Japan for that matter, in Southeast Asia there are millions of ethnic Chinese who have often lived there for generations while maintaining their original ethnic identity, or at least parts of it. While the level of their contacts to their ancestral homeland varies, they have sometimes been to play a part in the complicated pattern of relations between China and its south-eastern neighbours, even to the extent of influencing China’s national role conception towards these countries.

While the direct impact of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia on China’s foreign policy roles is still difficult to analyse, at least a few examples are available. For example, in many places of Southeast Asia, as in the French-controlled Indochina in the late 19th century, the arriving Chinese were of the merchant class with means of their own, unlike the menial workers that were shipped to e.g. North America (Barrett 2012: 7). In time, this economic impact of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia grew to immense proportions, benefiting the local economies but also creating envy and fear among the indigenous peoples. This envy has often

⁶⁴ The different terms relating to the ethnic Chinese living in Southeast Asia are by no means value-free, but come with different political and cultural connotations. For further discussion, see for example Suryadinata (2007: 1–3).

resulted in violent demonstrations against the overseas Chinese communities, or sometimes in outright purges, as has happened for example in Indonesia and Vietnam. In a pattern fitting to the complex political landscape in Southeast Asia, sometimes the ethnic Chinese in the region have been attacked because they have been seen as communists, and sometimes, as capitalist bourgeoisie (Suryadinata 2007: 11–12).

In any case, while *huaqiao* Chinese were not considered that important before the mid-20th century, many issues from the 1960s onwards have kept them under the scrutiny of not only their respective surrounding societies, but of the People's Republic as well as many western scholars. The post-1960s economic developments in Southeast Asia (including the birth of 'Asian Tigers'), the financial crisis of late 1990s, the return of Macau and Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997, the political developments in Taiwan, as well as the violence the overseas Chinese have met in for example Indonesia in 1960s, Vietnam in 1970s and again in Indonesia in late 1990s, have time after time brought attention to the ethnic Chinese of Southeast Asia (Charney, Yeoh and Kiong 2003: xix).

The impact of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia on the national role conception (NRC) of China has been changing, too. During the 2000s, overseas Chinese became an important part of China's "charm offensive," an attempt to bring China closer to the developing world (Kurlantzik 2007: 76–77). As described earlier in this study, this link between China and the global south has been one of the most significant international roles of the PRC. In the future, the impact of the overseas Chinese is likely to grow further, as the issue has links to the domestic opinion as well as to identity-building within China through "Chineseness," a vague concept with various ethnic connotations that has also been criticised for cultural imperialism (Chun 1996) and problematized due to the demands it can impose on people with already diverse sets of identities both in- and outside the PRC (Louie 2000: 646).

This has also created new kinds of ego expectations towards China's international roles. For example, during the latest, 2014 acts of violence towards the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, the Chinese government seemed to try to conceal

the news of the demonstrations from the Chinese public (Tiezzi 2014b), perhaps in fear that the Chinese public would react even more strongly than a few months before, when the Oscar nomination of *The Act of Killing*, a documentary describing the violence in Indonesia in 1965–1966, caused rage among Chinese netizens, who called the Chinese government to take action against governments allowing the purges of ethnic Chinese (Li 2014). While this cannot yet be considered as a vertical role contestation in the manner of described in chapter 2.4.3, it is clear that the role of a great power brings forth new ego expectations towards the Chinese rulers, expectations that might be difficult to ignore in the future. Moreover, should the People’s Republic of China become more assertive in its calls for the safety of the ethnic Chinese outside of China, it could easily be interpreted as “interference” by the Southeast Asian countries, something Beijing is likely trying to avoid due to its policy of “non-interference” [不干涉].⁶⁵

In any case, due to all these extensive contacts between China and Southeast Asia, the modern times have seen China enacting several even contradictory roles towards Southeast Asia. Whereas in Central Asia China’s influence has been weak until recently, it has been strongly involved in the 20th-century Southeast Asia: through its actions in the Non-Aligned Movement, its support for Sukarno’s leftist policies resulting in the 1965–1966 purge in Indonesia, its involvement in the Vietnam war(s) followed by the Sino-Vietnamese War in the late 1970s, and not least through its links to the murderous Khmer Rouge regime of Cambodia, China has been and still is an active part of the Southeast Asian political landscape. During all this time, China has been emphasising its policy of non-interference on the rhetorical level. This contrast between the rhetoric and the policy has not gone unnoticed by the Southeast Asian nations, and today China has to combat the resulting negative perceptions when enacting its new roles towards Southeast Asia. A good example of the roles of contemporary China can be seen in its changed relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional

⁶⁵ However, both of these instances described here took place outside the time frame of this study, and in the materials used in this work the *huaqiao* Chinese are almost non-existent.

organisation that had a firmly anti-communist agenda as its core from the very beginning, but with which China has had noticeable appeasement since the 1980s.

4.1.1. ASEAN

Compared to Central Asia, where 60–70 million people in half a dozen countries speak Turkic languages, profess Islam, share memories of the Soviet Union and are today ruled by more or less authoritarian post-Soviet regimes,⁶⁶ Southeast Asia is in fact extremely diverse: more than half a billion people in more than ten sovereign states with several languages, religions, and political traditions, ranging from democracies such as the Philippines and Indonesia, via communist party-states like Vietnam and Laos, to the Islamic Monarchy of Brunei and the pre-2011 military junta of Myanmar. It also includes one of the richest and most developed countries in the world, Singapore, as well as some nations firmly among the least developed, such as Cambodia and Laos.

However, the nations of Southeast Asia, like the Central Asian republics, have clearly felt that some level of integration, especially in economic issues, is necessary, and would serve the development of the region better than the current linguistic, political, religious and cultural mosaic. To establish this integration, a suitable multilateral organisation was set up already in the 1960s in the form of ASEAN, the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations. In addition to the overall development of the organisation itself, the development of the relations between ASEAN and China is an excellent example of the political change that has taken place in East- and Southeast Asia in the last 30–40 years. China was in fact a major reason for the existence of the organisation and its predecessor, the Association of Southeast Asia, in the 1960s, and, established in the midst of the Vietnam War in 1967, the ASEAN had two goals: economic cooperation and resistance against the expansion of communism in Southeast Asia. Due to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) in China, the escalation of the Vietnam Wars (1955–1975),

⁶⁶ With the exceptions of Tajikistan with its Persian-related language and Kyrgyzstan which has an existing, if shaky democratic political system.

and the increasing communist activities in Southeast Asia in general, the threat of communism was perceived to be imminent, and it provided the background for the increased cooperation.

It is noticeable how the changed policies of both the ASEAN and China have enabled the positive political developments in the region. While China's new policy of 'opening and reform' in late 1970s efficiently transformed a former 'Bastion of Revolution' into a pragmatic development-seeker, the ASEAN showed that it was not communism *per se*, but the fear of its aggressive form spreading further that had initiated the earlier policy of the organisation. Nothing underlines this change better than the inclusion of Laos and Vietnam as full members, or the institutionalisation of China's cooperation with the organisation through the ASEAN+3 and the ASEAN-China frameworks in the late 1990s.⁶⁷ Moreover, the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 helped ease suspicions on China, as it gave China an unprecedented opportunity to show its goodwill towards the struggling Southeast Asian neighbours. By keeping its own currency stable, China helped the countries of Southeast Asia to export more, whereas it could have used the opportunity to boost its own exports (Moore and Yang 2001). By this time, however, China was deeply in its peripheral diplomacy that called for creating a stable periphery, and it is easy to see how in the long term, China's decision has paved the way for an even better development for the country.

Apart from its (main) economic focus, the ASEAN has another feature making it more attractive to China: its loose, consensus-focused approach to cooperation, in many ways similar to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. This so-called ASEAN Way has often been credited when the successes of the organisation have been discussed (see e.g. Masilamani and Peterson 2014). The ASEAN Way also includes non-interference in domestic politics, again something that can be seen almost a precondition for closer cooperation with China. Of course, from the point of view of democratic reforms, non-interference has been an obstacle, too, for example in the way Myanmar's leading junta managed to stay in power for

⁶⁷ ASEAN+3 refers to the framework of cooperation between ASEAN and China, Japan, and South Korea.

decades until 2011. This approach did not waver even during the 1990s and early 2000s when many ASEAN member states seemed to be pushing for the democratisation of the developing countries (Kurlantzick 2014: 2). In fact, it is even suggested that the prominent presence of China's "development without democracy" hindered the otherwise more likely democratic developments in many ASEAN countries (ibid: 17–18).

It can also be argued that the ASEAN Way is a natural outcome of the low level of regionness in Southeast Asia. If regionness is understood as "the process whereby a geographical area is transformed from a passive object to an active subject capable of articulating the transnational interests of the emerging region" (Hettne and Söderbaum 2010: 461), the ASEAN is indeed weak and divided over many issues, with no intention to work towards political integration. Instead, its focus has been on the economic cooperation and, in the case of security cooperation, on restricting it that non-traditional security threats and relief work in case of natural disasters. For China, however, this low level of regionness is mostly a positive factor: when not in a position where it can control the cooperation (which seems to be the case with the SCO), keeping the cooperation so loose that the other parties are not encouraged to unite against China is a good strategy. After all, and as argued in both the previous chapter and the current one, China's great power role is built mainly on the ramifications of the country's economic achievements, and is not aimed towards creating political integration.

As to the territorial disputes between itself and several of the ASEAN member states, after the initial 'honeymoon' taking place in the midst of China's peripheral diplomacy in late 1990s and early 2000s, China has shown less and less interest in involving the ASEAN as a whole in solving these disputes. The peak of China's compromising policies towards its Southeast Asian neighbours seemed to take place in 2002–2003, when China signed both the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the Treaty of Amity & Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC),⁶⁸ and it also formed a strategic partnership with the ASEAN.

⁶⁸ Both the 2002 DOC and the 2003 TAC treaties are explained further below.

After that there has been a long decline towards the current situation, where – after nearly a decade of negotiations, and almost at the same time with the signing of a Free Trade Area agreement with the ASEAN in 2010 – China has started to act with unprecedented assertiveness on the South China Sea.

The changed attitude of China has sometimes been explained as a result of the country's increased political and military power, which would lead to more assertive foreign policy, as taught by the realist school of international relations (Mearsheimer 2010). It is true that the developments on the South China Sea (especially during the rule of Xi Jinping) do give support to this kind of thinking. After all, it is hardly a reassuring message to countries the size of Singapore to be reminded that “China is a big country, and other countries are small countries and that is just a fact,” as was stated by Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi in Singapore already in 2010 (The Economist 2012).

However, the example of Central Asia, as described in the previous chapter, shows that increasing capabilities do not necessarily lead China to more assertive foreign policy roles. As with Central Asia, China has in Southeast Asia preferred to move difficult issues to bilateral discussions, and to leave the ASEAN for more general ‘trust-building’ between China and the other countries. Due to the various cooperation mechanisms (China deals with the ASEAN both through the ASEAN+3, the ASEAN-China and the ASEAN Regional Forum frameworks) it is easier to have such a division of labour. In addition, China's security cooperation with the ASEAN focuses mainly on non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, transnational crime and natural disasters. This leaves the ASEAN itself largely side-lined when it comes to the most problematic issue China faces in Southeast Asia: the territorial disputes on the South China Sea.

4.1.2. China's Territorial Disputes on the South China Sea

As with other two cases of this study, China's territorial disputes on the South China Sea originate from the era China (and most of the other countries involved, for that matter) was not that interested in its borders. For the imperial China it was not necessary to define the borders between itself and its neighbours that precisely.

Thus, and also due to China's weakness during its 'Century of Humiliation' until 1949, the issues over the South China Sea islands and their surrounding areas have become relevant to the countries of the region only during the 20th century. And, as China has not, until recently, been in a position to acquire control over the disputed areas, the maritime territorial disputes on the South China Sea have become a part of the political reality in the region only decades after the foundation of the People's Republic of China.⁶⁹

On the other hand, the South China Sea disputes stand out from the two other cases of this study in two senses. Firstly, they are genuinely multilateral, as in some cases the same territory is demanded by several states. Even in Central Asia, where China had disputes with several countries, all the disputed territories were contested by China and only one other country, making the disputes in fact several bilateral issues. On the South China Sea, however, many of the areas are contested to a varying degree by three or more countries such as China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and Taiwan (Song and Zou 2014: 3–8). In addition to the 'local' contestants, the military presence of the United States makes the situation even more complicated, as it is not only an ally of some of the disputing factions but also adds weight to the Chinese concerns over the "containment" of the PRC.

Secondly, there is not only one (albeit multilateral) dispute over certain territory of the South China Sea, but in fact three, namely one concerning the freedom of navigation in the area, another one concerning the sizes of economic exclusive zones, and yet a separate dispute over the sovereignty over Spratly and Paracel islands as well as the Scarborough shoal (Tønnesson 2014: 209).⁷⁰ In addition, there is a disagreement over the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands, but as it falls under a different political issue of Taiwan, and of China considering Taiwan

⁶⁹ However, the Republic of China, now on Taiwan, occupied some of the South China Sea islands already in the 1940s, and continues to control Pratas Island, the largest in the region. Of the Chinese claims based on earlier history, see Dutton (2014).

⁷⁰ Moreover, there is a disagreement over the nature of certain rocks and reefs in the South China Sea, as, should they be defined as islands, they would have larger economic exclusive zones (EEZ) or in some cases even territorial waters.

a breakaway province of the People's Republic, this dispute is not included in my discussion here. Nevertheless, the fact that Taiwan is a claimant in some disputes in the South China Sea region makes the disputes even more complicated. What we have is a situation where the People's Republic of China is claiming for itself an area controlled by a party China also considers as belonging to itself.

In the eyes of the PRC, the South China Sea has been under the authority of China's Guangdong Province since the 1950s, and since 1988 of the then newly established Hainan Province. Between these years there were occasional standoffs and even clashes between the Chinese and the Vietnamese in, for example, 1953 and 1974 (near the Paracel Islands) and in 1988 (near the Spratly Islands), usually involving fishermen as well as armed forces (Tønnesson 2014).⁷¹ To strengthen its legal claim to the disputed areas, the PRC passed in 1992 a "Chinese Law of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone" in which the PRC land territory is defined as "the mainland of the People's Republic of China and its coastal islands; Taiwan and all islands appertaining thereto including the Diaoyu Islands; the Penghu Islands; the Dongsha Islands; the Xisha Islands; the Zhongsha Islands and the Nansha Islands; as well as all the other islands belonging to the People's Republic of China."⁷² Moreover, "the territorial sea of the People's Republic of China is the sea belt adjacent to the land territory and the internal waters of the People's Republic of China" (UN 1992), and this Chinese claim is often marked with the so-called 9-dash line in Chinese maps.

China kept its stance even when ratifying the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention Law on the Law of the Sea) in 1996, where China included a statement referring to the 1992 law, and reaffirmed its "sovereignty over all its archipelagos and islands as listed in article 2 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone." Moreover, China made known that it

⁷¹ In addition, Evan Jones (2017) has suggested that this era also saw a contestation between two Chinese bureaucracies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the People's Liberation Army, over the proper role of China on the South China Sea. However, as Jones (ibid: 362; 373) notes himself, this argument relies mainly on circumstantial evidence due to the opaque nature of the Chinese bureaucracy.

⁷² Nansha is the Chinese name for the Spratly Islands; Dongsha for Pratas; Xisha for the Paracel Islands and Zhongsha is known in the West as the Scarborough Shoal.

would require passing foreign warships to give an advance warning when they are traveling through this area (UN 1996). Thus, according to the Chinese interpretation almost all of the South China Sea belongs to the People's Republic of China, and China also has the right to restrict the passage of foreign ships of war through the procedure of "innocent passage," which normally allows such passing under certain provisions (Bosco 2016). This would limit, for example, the activities of the US Navy in the region.

In the early 2000s, however, China was showing certain openness for multilateral approaches in the territorial disputes on the South China Sea. In 2002 it, together with the ASEAN member states, signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which aimed for "self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability" (ASEAN 2002). Furthermore, in 2003 China (together with India) joined the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, an agreement dating back to mid-1970s and in which, in addition to other measures aimed to increase stability in the region, the signatories agree to not, in "any manner or form participate in any activity which shall constitute a threat to the political and economic stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of another High Contracting Party" (ASEAN 1976; ASEAN 2003).

This more conciliatory approach, a policy very much in accordance with China's international roles and the peripheral diplomacy of the 1990s, was extended even to some of the bilateral disputes in the area. In June 2004 China and Vietnam issued a joint communiqué, pledging – in addition to issues related to economic integration and general friendly sentiments – to "follow the consensus" of their respective governments, the 2002 DOC agreement, and to avoid "adopting unilateral action" including "not resorting to force against fishing boats" (ASEAN 2010). However, it soon became clear that China was ready to ignore the communiqué: already in January 2005 the Chinese again opened fire on a Vietnamese fishing vessel, killing nine people on board (TT 2005).

The fact that this incident took place so soon after the joint communiqué was a clear sign that China was not ready to back down from its demands. Moreover,

in 2006 China made a unilateral declaration regarding Article 298 of the UNCLOS, informing other parties that China would not accept “any of the procedures provided for in Section 2 of Part XV of the Convention with respect to all the categories of disputes referred to in paragraph 1 (a) (b) and (c) of Article 298 of the Convention” (UN 2006). In effect, this meant that China would not accept international arbitration related to its disputes on the South China Sea, leaving bilateral negotiations as the only way forward.⁷³ For China, also ASEAN arbitration was unacceptable, even as the Chinese leaders continued to praise the “leading role” of the ASEAN in the general East Asian cooperation.

In 2009, the United States announced its “Pivot to Asia,” a move generally seen to be aimed at countering the growing Chinese power amidst the increasing political and economic importance of Southeast Asia (Schiavenza 2013). The Chinese foreign policy leaders reacted to this renewed interest of the U.S. by demanding the “outsiders” to stay away from the region, a call in sharp contrast with the earlier, open approach to the cooperation in Southeast Asia (see e.g. Wen 2005a; Wen 2011b). Together with the U.S. “Pivot,” the internationalization of the South China Sea disputes by the Philippines and Vietnam, as described by Tønnesson (2014: 208–209), most likely influenced this policy change, but as will be discussed below, it can be seen also as a move resulting from China’s role change.

China’s push for bilateral agreements has not been without successes: in addition to the 2004 joint communiqué, in 2011 China and Vietnam signed an agreement regarding their approach to the South China Sea issue, while the results of the agreement have been vague. 2016 saw similar developments between China and the Philippines, even though the results of a potential rapprochement are yet to be seen. Meanwhile, China has continued its unilateral activities by establishing Shansha City to govern the claimed territory in July 2012 and, in 2013, causing the

⁷³ This became reality in the summer 2016, when China rejected the decision of the Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration known as South China Sea Arbitration, which ruled in favour of Philippines. The developments of the summer and autumn of 2016 are discussed briefly in chapter 6.2.

most vocal international opposition so far, it started to build artificial islands with permanent structures over the coral reefs it occupied (Southerland 2016).⁷⁴

The issue of the South China Sea is extremely complicated for anyone who wants to get to bottom of questions such as who is the rightful owner of the islands and who should have control over the contested region. However, my research does not deal with these questions, but instead, focuses on the Chinese foreign policy roles, their sources as well as their ramifications, and from this perspective the various disputes can and should be considered as a whole. This is also the way they are often framed in official Chinese discourse and in the Chinese academic discussion.

In contrast to the two other cases in this study, it is good to remember that some of the disputes here are multilateral and would exist even without Chinese involvement. China does make the disputes additionally complex, though: already in its current form China's military capabilities are by far more developed than other countries directly involved in the South China Sea disputes, such as Vietnam and the Philippines. This has led to a situation where the other countries have approached a strong external power (the U.S.) which e.g. in the case of the Philippines has resulted in extensive security cooperation.⁷⁵ This gives China a reason to call for "keeping the externals out" regardless whether by this they mean the United States Navy or the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration panel, as well as to call for the parties to solve the disputes bilaterally, as happened in Central Asia (much to China's satisfaction). China's attempted limitation of the South China Sea dilemma to a series of bilateral disputes has later become a permanent feature of Chinese foreign policy, together with Chinese unilateral activities that can easily be interpreted as a breach of the 2002 DOC declaration as well as of the 2003 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

⁷⁴ While other claimants of the area have also engaged in similar projects, China's activities take place on a completely different scale and thus the subsequent destruction to the marine life has been far worse (Southerland 2016).

⁷⁵ The US-Philippines alliance has met with some difficulties after the election of President Duterte in 2016.

In my view, the territorial disputes are the biggest obstacle for the Chinese role change towards the role of a great power in Southeast Asia, followed by China's historical roles as a regional hegemon. Moreover, one of my main arguments in this study is that China's overall great power role is based on economic development, and the ASEAN is *the* significant other in this. The ASEAN is not only a conduit for China's economic influence in the region, but genuinely the best available tool for wider economic integration in Southeast Asia. Thus, when analysing China's role change towards Southeast Asia, it is necessary to do so in the context of these three overlapping aspects: China's historical roles, the ASEAN, and the territorial disputes. Historical roles provide the background, the ASEAN the forum, and the territorial disputes the framework for analysis.

4.2. China's Role Change in Southeast Asia

As in the case of China's relations with Central Asia, regular multilateral summits offer the best venue for tracking China's national role conceptions as well as its subsequent foreign policy roles towards Southeast Asia. Since the beginning of the ASEAN-China Dialogue in 1991, China has actively taken part in ASEAN activities, especially since China was approved as a full Dialogue Partner in 1996. During the time-frame of this study (2002–2012) it had already become a custom that the Premier of the People's Republic of China would annually attend the ASEAN+3 and ASEAN-China summits, which take place in conjunction with the full ASEAN summits that are not open for non-members like China, Japan or South Korea. To have the Chinese Premier instead of the Chairman-President attending the summits not only divides the workload among the Chinese collective leadership, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, but it also follows the tradition in having the Premier in charge of the economic relations between China and its neighbours.

Thus, Wen Jiabao, the PRC Premier in 2003–2013, attended all the relevant ASEAN summits throughout his terms of office, and most of his speeches at those summits are available. Only a couple of times, such as both the ASEAN+3 and ASEAN-China summits in 2009 and in 2012, his speeches have been published in

the format of reports (instead of full-text speeches) that nevertheless quote Wen in great detail. All in all, this study uses almost 20 ASEAN-related speeches by Wen Jiabao from between the 16th and the 18th Party Congresses of the CCP. In addition to the tracing of China's role development during this time frame, this material allows the comparison between two different contexts, namely the ASEAN+3, in which China attends together with Japan and South Korea, and the ASEAN-China, in which cooperation with China is the only reason for the summit in the first place.

Furthermore, it is necessary to compare China's role development in the context of Southeast Asia with the same (and simultaneous) process in Central Asia, discussed in the previous chapter. The similarities and differences between China's policies towards these two regions were shortly discussed already at the beginning of this chapter, and this section focuses more deeply on the development of China's national role conception (NRC) and actual roles. For example, unlike in the case of Central Asia where Hu Jintao kept China's border disputes outside the spotlight, the issue of the territorial disputes on the South China Sea are referred to many times by Wen Jiabao. However, this takes place mainly in the context of ASEAN-China meetings, while ASEAN+3 speeches do not usually discuss issues such as sovereignty and territorial disputes. This is hardly surprising, as in the framework of ASEAN+3 China is sharing the attention with Japan and South Korea, and China has further territorial disputes with both of them.⁷⁶

Whereas China's role development towards Central Asia could be seen to take place in three phases, in the context of Southeast Asia there are only two of these, roughly separated by a time period from the 17th CCP Party Congress in 2007 to the 2009 ASEAN summits in Hua Hin, Thailand. As there were no ASEAN summits in 2008, the contrast between the time before and after the international financial crisis (which had an impact in the case of Central Asia as well) and the first signs of the U.S. 'Pivot to Asia' in 2009 is especially clear: by 2009 or at 2010 the latest, China's national role conception was clearly one of a great power, as

⁷⁶ In the case of South Korea, the dispute over Socotra Rock has impacted China-Korea relations only little and has thus only minimal effect on China's international roles. China's territorial dispute with Japan, however, is discussed in chapter 5 of this study.

illuminated both in this chapter and in the two other cases of this study. However, unlike in Central Asia, the negative alter expectations towards role enactment based on this role conception lead China to adapt its role into a more acceptable one for its significant others.

As was the case in the previous chapter, when tracing China's role development towards Southeast Asia, both the ideational and the material components of China's NRC receive special attention. In addition, in the case of Southeast Asia (and in contrast with Central Asia), due to the unsolved territorial disputes on the South China Sea, external alter expectations towards China's foreign policy role development is discussed as well. And finally, the vulnerability of the ASEAN when facing a partner capable of influencing the internal dynamics of the organisation in order to solve its own role conflicts shall receive attention, too.

4.2.1. Slow Deviation from Peripheral Diplomacy

The overall view of China's challenges in Southeast Asia in the early 2000s have been very well analysed by Dao Shulin and Zhai Kun in their 2002 report on China's ASEAN policy, where they summarise the work conducted by the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) team for Southeast Asia. According to Dao and Zhai (2002: 9), the issues challenging China's good relations with the ASEAN at the beginning of the 21st century would probably include the so-called China threat theory,⁷⁷ the maritime territorial disputes on the South China Sea, the Taiwan issue, and potential great power rivalry. The prescience of the CICIR scholars is commendable, as during the following decade all the challenges with the sole exception of Taiwan would arise as issues that the Chinese leadership needed to address.

When Wen Jiabao attended his first ASEAN summit as the Premier of the People's Republic of China in October 2003, China was still very much attached to

⁷⁷ The China Threat Theory [中国威胁论] refers in general to the discourse outside of China that sees the rise of China as a threat to stability in the world. Making this discourse less prominent has been part of China's foreign policy for a long time.

its peripheral diplomacy. Wen (2003b; 2004b) refers to this policy in both his 2003 and 2004 ASEAN-China speech, explaining, for example, how China will “pursue the peripheral diplomatic policy of neighbours as partners” [中国政府奉行与邻为善, 以邻为伴的周边外交方针] (Wen 2003b), and how “China’s development could not be separated from East Asia and East Asia’s prosperity would need China” [中国的发展离不开东亚, 东亚的繁荣也需要中国] (Wen 2003a).⁷⁸ While the idea of the interdependence of China and Southeast Asia showed no signs of weakening between 2003 and 2012, seeing the relationship between China and its surrounding areas [*zhoubian*, 周边] through the promotion of peripheral diplomacy [*zhoubian waijiao*, 周边外交], would diminish greatly after 2003–2004.

However, in the first years of the new millennium, China’s foreign policy reveals a country still very interested in continuing its policy of mid and late 1990s, emphasising economic cooperation as “a necessity for regional development” [加强区域经济合作是东亚发展的客观要求] (Wen 2003a). “Equal and mutual cooperation” would, “based on facts, lead to long-term peace, stability and prosperity” [事实证明, 平等互利合作才是通向地区长期和平, 稳定与繁荣的康庄大道] (*ibid.*). Moreover, in order to show its non-aggressiveness in the territorial disputes, China had signed the “Declaration on the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea” (DOC) in 2002, although the actual implications of the declaration, as discussed above, were limited, as has been the case with the “Treaty of Amity & Cooperation in Southeast Asia,” which China signed at the 2003 ASEAN Summit.

According to Wen (2003b), the DOC “reflects the consensus to settle the disputes peacefully” [体现出双方和平解决南海争议] and the “Chinese side has a positive attitude on the implementation of the ‘Declaration’” [中方对落实《宣言》持积极态度]. However, it was already clear at this point that China saw security cooperation with the ASEAN to focus mainly on non-traditional security issues:

⁷⁸ In his speeches, Wen Jiabao often uses the term East Asia [*dongya*, 东亚] instead of Southeast Asia [*dongnanya*, 东南亚] when discussing the ASEAN and its cooperation with e.g. China and the overall development of the region(s), as the latter term would usually exclude China. Moreover, the two concepts are not precise, and e.g. Vietnam is often seen to be part of both.

even the “threat of terrorism” mentioned by Wen (2003b) would in later years make way for even less controversial topics such as transnational crime and the prevention of pandemics. Unlike the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, with its early focus on border issues and “ethno-religious extremism,” the focus of China in its ASEAN-cooperation has been from the very beginning in economic cooperation and developing the structure of the cooperation itself, as can be seen in Wen (2003b) calling for a feasibility study on the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area. Moreover, the cooperation with the ASEAN was to be kept “open and inclusive” [开放包容] towards other regions and countries (ibid.). This, too, was to change later.

In 2004 China was also still open for the ASEAN having role in solving the South China Sea disputes: in the ASEAN-China meeting in Vientiane, Wen (2004b) explained that China was,

on the basis of the principle of ‘shelving the dispute and seeking for common development’ as well as mutual respect, equality and benefit, willing to actively explore the ways and means of joint development in the disputed waters of the South China Sea with the concerned countries

[中方愿本着“搁置争议, 共同开发”的原则, 在相互尊重, 平等互利的基础上, 与有关国家积极探讨在南海争议海域开展共同开发的途径与方].

While the difference between the ASEAN and “concerned countries” was clear, in the ASEAN+3 meeting Wen showed green light for a follow-up action of the DOC in form of “special meeting of high-level officials and establishing a working group to start cooperation on the South China Sea as soon as possible” [中方愿与东盟举行特别高官会, 成立工作组, 尽快启动南海合作] (Wen 2004a). Moreover, China was also aware of its position as a rising power as well of the potential concerns this would cause among its neighbours: Wen promised that “China’s development will never pose a threat to other countries” [中国的发展决不会对他国构成威胁] and that China “will never seek any form of hegemony in this region” [也决不会在本地区谋求任何形式的霸权] (ibid.).

The strong denial of any hegemonic aspirations in 2004 was probably also due to the simultaneous change in the official Chinese rhetoric in general: the term “peaceful rise” [和平崛起] was considered too assertive and was replaced with “peaceful development” [和平发展] (see chapter 1.2.1 of this study). In fact, the term “rise” was used by Wen Jiabao in his ASEAN+3 summit speech in Vientiane, but he was referring to the rise of Asia, not exclusively that of China (Wen 2004a). This change was heralded in April 2004, when in a speech at the China Foreign Affairs University, the then Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Yi had called for the ASEAN to lead, and others (i.e. China, Japan and South Korea) to have a supporting, though central, role in the cooperation in East Asia:

So far, the ASEAN has played a major role in promoting East Asian cooperation... In the future, we would like to continue to support the leading role of ASEAN, but also advocate the respective advantages and roles of China, Japan and the ROK as much as possible

[东盟迄今在东亚合作中发挥着主要推动作用...未来我们愿继续支持东盟的主导作用,同时也主张尽可能发挥中日韩的各自优势和作用] (Wang 2004).

This was confirmed also by Wen in the 2004 speech, where he saw the cooperation in the framework of ASEAN+3 as the “pioneer” [先导] of Asian cooperation. To emphasise the “responsible” nature of China, Wen also promised that China would keep its own currency stable amidst the rising speculations concerning the devaluation of the renminbi (China Daily 2004). Thus, as during the 1997 Asian financial crisis, China was enacting the role of a trustworthy partner or, as described by Gottwald and Duggan (2011: 243–244) in the context of global financial governance, at least “a benevolent bystander.”

The ASEAN summits in 2005, taking place after the deadly Asian Tsunami of late 2004 as well as the SARS epidemic, gave China an opportunity to show additional goodwill towards Southeast Asia. According to Wen Jiabao (2005a) speaking at the ASEAN+3, China was to establish a regional disaster relief centre to work in cooperation with the East Asian countries and to create a better response

to natural disasters. Also, by this time the Chinese role change, already familiar in the context of Central Asia, was starting to show in Southeast Asia, too. Wen (ibid.) pointed out that China had already provided nearly USD 3 billion to the ASEAN member states as economic aid during the previous five years. In addition, he promised to direct to the ASEAN countries one-third of the world-wide preferential loans and preferential buyers' credits announced by Hu Jintao at the United Nations earlier the same year (ibid.). An opportunity for a new kind of role enactment had arisen, and China was eagerly taking it up.

At this early phase of China's role change in Southeast Asia, implications for the security issues were still unclear. In 2005, for example, there were no major changes to earlier developments. In the ASEAN-China summit, taking place immediately after the ASEAN+3 meeting, Wen (2005b) praised the efforts of the ASEAN-China cooperation in promoting the free trade area, as well as the "fruitful security cooperation" that was taking the form of plans for the joint development of the South China Sea together with Vietnam and the Philippines, as well as cooperation in non-traditional security threats. Emphasising consensus-building, Wen (ibid.) insisted on "seeking common ground while holding back differences" [求同存异].⁷⁹ Moreover, according to Wen (2005a), China

opposes the promotion of self-enclosed or exclusive group in the region, supports the strengthening of communication and dialogue with the United States, the European Union and other countries and organisations, and constantly expands common interests and seeks common development

[中国反对本地区搞自我封闭或排他性集团, 支持 10+3 与美国, 欧盟及其他域外国家和组织加强沟通与对话, 不断扩大共同利益, 寻求共同发展].

⁷⁹ "求同存异" is a *chengyu* [成语], a 4-character idiom typical to the Chinese language. Wen Jiabao's speeches regularly apply these idioms.

While in 2006 there were no ASEAN summits (the 2005 summits had taken place in December and the following ones were already in January 2007), China and the ASEAN held a commemoration meeting for the 15th anniversary of the ASEAN-China dialogue in Nanning, China, in October. In his speech at the meeting Wen Jiabao (2006) touched upon the cooperation between China and ASEAN in much the same vein as in the previous few years, praising ASEAN's "leading role" in regional cooperation and listing several positive developments in ASEAN-China relations. In a continuation of the 2005 summit, Wen made additional financial commitments on behalf of China to the development of the ASEAN and, again as in the case of China's role enactment in Central Asia, promised that China would train ASEAN-based professionals in the coming years (*ibid.*).

During these years China was not pushing for major developments in regard to the South China Sea disputes. As pointed out by Cai Penghong (2005: 33) the disputes were related to territorial sovereignty and integrity of the relevant nations, who in normal circumstances would not be interested in "substantive concessions" in the matter. However, and especially due to energy resources in the area, unilateral actions and subsequent disputes were to be expected, and, after the precedent of the 2002 DOC agreement, the settling of the disputes was likely to shift from bilateral to multilateral settlements (*ibid.*). While being correct in his first assessments, the following years proved Cai wrong on the last one.

China's international roles during the years between the 16th and the 17th CCP Party Congresses (2002 and 2007), were clearly rooted in China's peripheral diplomacy, emphasising the beneficial nature of China's economic rise without putting too much emphasis on the fact that China had, both in terms of economic and of political power, surpassed most of its neighbours. The openness for a multilateral solution in the South China Sea disputes, emphasis on the strong role of the ASEAN in overall regional cooperation (including the territorial disputes), and the acceptance of "outsiders" all point towards a role of a developing country putting its economic development before other aspects of foreign policy.

However, signs of China's more open unilateral actions towards the South China Sea disputes were soon visible: in August 2006, China made an additional

declaration to the UNCLOS, which already upon the 1996 ratification had included a claim of Chinese sovereignty in the South China Sea. Now China would not accept any procedures related to some aspects of article 298 of the convention, which in practise meant that China would not accept any outside arbitration in the issue. This was designed to clear the way for bilateral discussions, a settlement method that would later become the only acceptable way for China. In fact, even though in Nanning Wen Jiabao was still calling for continuous implementation of the DOC and further security cooperation between China and the ASEAN, China was already preparing for a potential escalation on the South China Sea. In the coming years, this dualistic policy towards Southeast Asia would become a clear part of China's role change.

4.2.2. The Return of the Great Powers

The year 2007 saw two ASEAN summits as well as the 17th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. As described in the previous chapter, the party congress brought forth not only a more stable position for the CCP Chairman and President of China Hu Jintao (and Premier Wen Jiabao), but also an idea of deep interconnectedness between the development of China and the rest of the world. This idea of interconnectedness, which can be seen as a sign of a great power identity,⁸⁰ was also evident in the speeches of Wen Jiabao at the ASEAN summits of 2007. Both of his speeches at the two meetings during the January summit carry that message:

China is a member of the East Asian region, its fate interdependent on the East Asian countries with which it will stand through thick and thin.⁸¹ Stability and prosperity of East Asia is an important guarantor for the development of China, and China's development also brings opportunities for the countries of East Asia.

⁸⁰ The definition of a great power often links the influence of a country to wider, global scale frameworks.

⁸¹ 休戚与共 is another *chengyu*, referring to a close relationship withstanding both ups and downs.

[中国是东亚地区的一员, 与东亚各国命运相依, 休戚与共。东亚的稳定与繁荣是中国发展的重要保障, 中国的发展也为东亚国家带来了机遇] (Wen 2007a).

China's development is inseparable of the ASEAN, and also ASEAN development needs China. Tied by common interests, the two sides are linked closely together.

[中国的发展离不开东盟, 东盟的发展也需要中国, 共同的利益纽带把双方紧密地连结在一起] (Wen 2007b).

The second ASEAN summit of 2007 took place in Singapore in November, one month after the 17th Party Congress of the CCP. By this time, China's great power role was already taking shape, as made apparent in the speeches of Wen Jiabao. First, Wen (2007d) reminded his audience of the origin of the ASEAN+3 cooperation, which had begun 10 years earlier amidst the "trials and hardships" [风雨, lit. wind and rain] of the Asian financial crisis, and had paved the way for deeper cooperation among East Asian nations. It was hardly necessary for Wen to remind his audience about the actions (or lack of them) of China during that crisis, when, by keeping its currency stable, Beijing managed to gain plenty of goodwill and realised the potential of its economic power.

In the new stage of its development, ASEAN+3 should, according to Wen, strengthen and deepen the cooperation and base it on mutual respect and equality. "In today's profoundly changing international environment," said Wen (*ibid.*),

the 10 + 3 countries should uphold the principle of mutual respect for their independence and sovereignty, mutual respect for their chosen social systems and development models, consider the development of their neighbours as an opportunity rather than a threat to their own development, deepen mutual good-neighbourly relations, and establish equal relations between the states.

[10+3 国家应坚持相互尊重独立和主权, 相互尊重 各自选择的社会制度和发展模式, 将邻国的发展作为自身发展的机遇而非威胁, 加深睦邻互信, 建立平等的国家关系].

In calling for the ASEAN to uphold such principles as state sovereignty and respect for different kinds of social systems can be seen as preaching to the converted: the ASEAN had already since its beginning been adamant on state sovereignty and had very few problems with different kinds of political systems among its members. However, for China these issues were elements in its international roles: defending authoritarian systems in e.g. Central Asia was important for China, so it was stating the same in Southeast Asia, too.

In addition, Wen Jiabao felt it necessary to define the Chinese views on the openness of the ASEAN+3 cooperation, which China had “always maintained” (Wen 2007d):

At the same time, it is necessary to further explore and clarify the roles of the regional cooperation mechanisms according to their characteristics, and promote healthy development of the regional cooperation in East Asia

[同时, 也有必要根据各个区域合作机制的特点, 进一步探索和明确它们承担的角色和作用, 推动东亚区域合作的健康发展].

Thus, according to the Chinese view, the ASEAN should focus on economic development and let other initiatives such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the East Asia Summit take care of other issues, if needed. If the ASEAN would focus itself only on economic integration it would make the organisation stronger, as economic integration – in contrast to e.g. political integration or deeper military cooperation, especially in its traditional forms – is possible even for countries of such diversity as the ones in East- and Southeast Asia. In other words, China’s main interest towards Southeast Asia (and the main driver of China’s great power role),

economic development, should not be disturbed by issues such as the ongoing territorial disputes.

While the recommendations of Wen Jiabao were probably not unfamiliar to ASEAN member states, and would have sounded like something that made sense at the time, they also mark a change in the way China saw its own role in the ASEAN. Before, China's recommendations had been of practical nature and fairly specific, for example calling for more steering in economic integration towards the Free Trade Area between China and the ASEAN. This time, however, China – not even a full member of the ASEAN – was advising the organisation on how it should run itself, both in principle and in practice. This was new kind of steering from China, stemming from its new self-confidence and new national role conception, pushing for more active international roles.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in 2007–2008 China's national role conception was shifting to the one of a great power, paving the way for a role change in its foreign policy towards Central Asia. In Southeast Asia, China was, however, more uncertain of this role, as the territorial disputes on the South China Sea would mean that the alter expectations of countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines would not support China's great power role. Thus, separating the security issues (with the exception of non-traditional security threats) from China's cooperation with the ASEAN made sense. When comparing China's role change in the cases of Central and Southeast Asia it is also important to keep in mind the vastly different calibre of China's economic interests in these two regions, as well as the very different security situations – especially in the form of the U.S. military presence.

The year 2008, like 2006, brought no ASEAN summits, but at this time China's great power role conception was boosted further by the Beijing Olympics, seen as China's "great power coming out party" (Layne et. al. 2012: 421). Moreover, as the global financial crisis matured in 2008, the Chinese leaders gave in to domestic and external pressure and started in late 2008 a massive stimulus package to support the faltering economy of the country, an act seen by Gottwald and Duggan (2011: 245–246) as China's attempt to redefine its position in global

financial governance. This, too, helped China to come at terms with its great power role, as a global outreach is widely considered as the prerequisite to the *status* of a great power.

While China's aim to diverge the ASEAN-led economic integration from the territorial disputes on the South China Sea were successful to an extent, it did not mean that the security situation in the area would have developed in the direction wished for by China. In early 2009 the then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited the ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan during her trip to Asia. During her visit Clinton expressed the will of the United States to respond to the "concern" expressed by their friends in the ASEAN "that the United States has not been fully engaged in the region at a time when we should be expanding our partnerships to address the wide range of challenges confronting us, from regional and global security, to the economic crisis, to climate change and human rights" (U.S. Department of State 2009). As a response to these concerns, the United States was the first going to join the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. Another reason for joining was, according to Clinton, that the U.S. "must have strong relationships and a strong and productive presence here in Southeast Asia" (ibid.).

China was quick to respond to this increased U.S. interest in Southeast Asia, later dubbed as the 'Pivot to Asia.' In April 2009 an investment and credit plan of massive proportions (even on a Chinese standard) was announced. According to the plan, China was to set up an investment fund for ASEAN-related infrastructure projects worth of USD 10bn as well as provide the ASEAN countries with USD 15bn cooperation credit, among other initiatives (ASEAN 2009). China was thus enacting its (economic) great power role in much the same way as in Central Asia at this same time, by making use of its substantial economic resources.

However, and in accordance with the Chinese divide-and-rule approach to Southeast Asia, less than three weeks after the announcement of funds and credits, and soon after the joint submission of Vietnam and Malaysia calling for 200 nautical miles limitation of the continental shelf in South China Sea, China sent a letter to the United Nations to once again remind the UN of China's position.

According to the letter, “China has indisputable sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and adjacent waters, and enjoys sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the relevant waters as well as the seabed and subsoil thereafter” (UN 2009). The map attached to the letter had been marked with the already famous “9-dash line,” claiming the near totality of China’s control of the South China Sea. Moreover, according to the letter, the submission by Malaysia and Vietnam “has seriously infringed China’s sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the South China Sea” (ibid.). Again, China was making sure that the economic integration in Southeast Asia would take place in the ASEAN framework, while the territorial disputes were to be seen as bilateral issues between China and the other contestants.

Later, in October 2009 at the ASEAN summit in Hua Hin, in Thailand, the ramifications of China’s great power role become even clearer. The speech by Wen Jiabao was not published *verbatim*, but according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry report, and in relation to the expanding intra-regional trade and investments, “China is willing to take the lead in advancing 10+3 economic and trade cooperation” [中方愿牵头推进 10+3 经贸合作] (FMRPC 2009). According to the same report, aimed at the domestic audience,

leaders of all countries universally appreciated China’s effective response to the international financial crisis, active promotion of East Asian cooperation, maintenance of financial stability in the region and important contribution to the promotion of economic growth and interaction process

[各国领导人普遍赞赏中国有效应对国际金融危机,积极推动东亚合作,为保持本地区金融稳定,促进经济增长和一体化进程作出了重要贡献] (ibid.).

This self-appointed leading role of China was further affirmed by Wen Jiabao in the ASEAN summit in Hanoi, Vietnam, in October 2010. Again, in the context of

economic cooperation aiming to create the East Asian Free Trade Zone,⁸² Wen (2010a) said that

China, acting as the leading country of 10+3 economic and trade cooperation, has come up with a roadmap for the facilitation of 10+3 trade, focusing on the strengthening of the cooperation between the 10+3 member countries in facilitation of trade through the next five years

[中国作为 10+3 经贸合作牵头国, 提出了 10+3 贸易便利化路线图, 重点是通过今后五年努力, 加强 10+3 成员国在贸易便利化领域的合作].

While only a year earlier China was “willing” to take the lead of economic cooperation, in 2010 it felt it had already done so, for the benefit of all the members of ASEAN+3.

Interestingly, this bolder role-taking took place amidst Chinese fears of the renewed U.S. interest in Southeast Asia. According to Lu Fanghua from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the United States was aiming to “lead” the ASEAN towards a multilateral solution, thus posing a threat to “national economy and security” of China. What China needed to do was to “prevent a joint alignment between the U.S., Japan and ASEAN members” and gain control over the Scarborough Shoal and the Spratly Islands (Lu 2010: 137–139). At the same time, other researchers were pondering the meaning of the new great power role of China. Wang Junsheng, another scholar of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, emphasised the need to maintain good relations between the great powers even amidst the rising power of China.⁸³ As an example of China’s “peaceful culture” he points out that China continued to allow the visits of the U.S. aircraft carriers in the Hong Kong harbour after the “incident” that had caused the Sino-US relations to

⁸² China-ASEAN FTA had come to effect at the beginning of 2010.

⁸³ In this article, Wang sees China clearly as one of the great powers discussed, but used the concept in the sense of status, not role.

deteriorate in early 2010, and that had made “some” of the Southeast Asian nations to “act recklessly” against China in the South China Sea (Wang 2010: 41).

At the ASEAN-China summit in Hanoi, again taking place at the same time with the ASEAN+3 summit, Wen Jiabao nevertheless attempted to reassure the ASEAN member states of China’s goodwill regardless of the new role of his country. Referring to the potential future of the relations between China and the United States, Wen (2010b), promised that

China cherishes its traditional friendship with the ASEAN countries, advocates harmony⁸⁴ and common development, does not engage in egoism⁸⁵ and opposes hegemonism. Neither great power co-rule nor great power confrontation are in the interests of the countries of this region. China is always willing to be a good neighbour, good friend and good partner to the ASEAN countries

[中国珍视同东盟国家的传统友谊, 崇尚以和为贵, 讲信修睦, 共同发展, 不搞唯我独尊, 反对霸权主义。无论是大国共治, 还是大国对峙, 都不符合本地区国家的利益。中国愿同 东盟国家永远做好邻居, 好朋友, 好伙伴].

However, only few months after Wen’s words China once more showed that its commitment to friendship with the ASEAN countries did not extend to the South China Sea disputes. According to Carlyle Thayer (2011: 78), starting in the first half of 2011, China “embarked on a pattern of aggressively asserting its sovereignty claims in the South China Sea” especially towards the Philippines and Vietnam. These new, more assertive policies did not prevent China from continuing to frame itself as the friend of Southeast Asia, and in the ASEAN+3 summit in Bali, Indonesia in November 2011 Wen Jiabao mentioned the “unfavourable external environment” under which “more effective measures to enhance cohesion” should

⁸⁴ 以和为贵, a *chengyu* that translates literally as “harmony is precious,” followed by 讲信修睦, lit. paying particular attention to trust and striving for harmony.

⁸⁵ 唯我独尊, a *chengyu* idiom describing arrogance.

be taken and “endogenous development” should be strengthened [在外部环境不利的情况下, 我们要采取更加有力的措施, 增强凝聚力和内生发展动力] (Wen 2011a).

Moreover, at the 2011 ASEAN-China summit on the same day, Wen returned explicitly to the issue of the South China Sea for the first time since the 2007 summits. Wen (2011b) reiterated the Chinese pledge that the country would never seek hegemony and would remain opposed to any “hegemonic acts” [任何霸权行为]. Moreover, China would

always adhere to the peripheral foreign policy of ‘building friendships and partnerships with neighbours’ and will abide by the Treaty of Amity of Cooperation in Southeast Asia. The dispute over the South China Sea between countries in the region is a problem that has accumulated over several years and should be settled through friendly consultations and negotiations between the countries directly involved. External forces should not intervene under any pretext.

[中国永远不谋求霸权, 反对任何霸权行为, 将始终奉行“与邻为善, 以邻为伴”的周边外交政策, 恪守《东南亚友好合作条约》。本地区有关国家在南海存在的争议, 是多年积累下来的问题, 应由直接有关的主权国家通过友好协商和谈判予以解决。外部势力不应以任何借口介入] (ibid.).

Once again, China was presenting itself to the ASEAN as something unthreatening, even amidst the escalated South China Sea dispute, since the dispute should not be seen to concern the ASEAN. The fact that the dispute was mainly between China and two ASEAN member states, the Philippines and Vietnam, was of no consequence, as China wanted to distinguish between, on the other hand, its cooperation with the ASEAN, and on the other China’s state sovereignty and territorial integrity, values that China finally in 2011 defined as its “core interests” (China.org.cn 2011).⁸⁶ Moreover, China’s new self-confidence could be seen in the

⁸⁶ While China has never claimed South China Sea *per se* as a “core interest” (see Johnston 2013: 17–20), the linkage between South China Sea disputes and China’s proclaimed territorial integrity

open discrepancy between the rhetoric and action: while at the same time repeatedly condemning any “hegemonic acts” through Wen Jiabao, China was becoming increasingly assertive and hegemonic in its own actions.

By this time China was not only more comfortable in its role of a great power (with Wen Jiabao talking of it openly), but it was also (and in accordance with this role) even more adamant in its view that the South China Sea disputes were to be discussed only among the disputing countries with no external arbitration or assistance whatsoever. While the most likely reason for this attitude was the increased U.S. activity in Southeast Asia due to its ‘Pivot to Asia’ policy, it also meant that as far as China was concerned, the ASEAN, too, should stay side-lined in the dispute, and China was ready to use whatever means it had to make sure of this. In early 2012, China first arrested Vietnamese fishermen in a disputed area and prevented the Filipino forces from arresting Chinese fishermen in another area, claimed by the Philippines (Miks 2012). When a few months later, at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting met in Cambodia in July, the host country vetoed the meeting from issuing a joint communiqué stating the ASEAN’s view of the recent developments on the South China Sea. As this was the first time such a communiqué had been blocked since 1967, the Chinese (economic) influence over Cambodia was widely seen as the reason for the veto (Khoo 2015: 52).

In the next ASEAN-China summit, taking place again in Cambodia in November 2012, Wen Jiabao reminded the other nations of the “great potential of the Chinese economy, bringing more opportunities to the ASEAN countries” [中国经济仍有很大潜力, 将为东盟各国带来更多的机遇]. It was also, according to Wen, necessary to “eliminate all kinds of interference” [要排除各种干扰] hindering the East Asian integration (Liu 2012a). Moreover, Wen reminded other nations of the “humiliating history of foreign invasion” [遭受外来入侵的屈辱历史] both China and the ASEAN countries had experienced, as well as of the “pain of the Cold War

lead easily to this conclusion. However, it is possible that China has been avoiding this exact phrasing either in order to keep the negotiations open (*ibid.*) or to keep it in reserve, to be used as a “strategic warning” should the situation escalate even more, as pointed out by Bonnie S. Glaser (2012).

between the superpowers” [大国之间冷战带来的痛苦] (Liu 2012b). He continued in the same vein in the 7th East Asia Summit on the following day, 20th November 2012. Wen (FMPRC 2012d) pointed out the slow economic recovery of the world as well as the necessity of increased economic integration and cooperation in the region. He also called for the East Asian countries to “strive to run their own affairs” [要努力办好各国自己的事情] and reminded his audience that the Chinese economy continued to be “an important engine of the regional and world economy” [继续成为地区和世界经济的重要引擎]. Moreover, according to Wen China “had always advocated mutual respect and understanding, believed in peace and stability, and is willing to play a role of a responsible great power for peace, stability and development in East Asia” [中国历来倡导互尊互谅, 讲信修睦, 愿为东亚和平, 稳定, 发展继续发挥负责任大国作用] (ibid.).

As with the Ministerial Meetings earlier the same year, the (new) Chinese influence inside Southeast Asian regional cooperation is visible in the November 2012 summits of ASEAN. Cambodia announced that the ASEAN would focus on “existing ASEAN-China mechanisms and would not internationalize the South China Sea from now on” (Khoo 2015: 53). At the same time, in a session closed for outsiders, Wen Jiabao reaffirmed China’s stance on its “unquestionable” sovereignty over the South China Sea islands (ibid.). In essence, the path for the further escalation of the South China Sea disputes was ready, and the ASEAN was effectively side-lined from its earlier central position in mediating of the disputes. China had achieved a position where it could continue to develop its economy-based great power role together with the ASEAN, without having to worry about the negative impact of the South China Sea disputes on the arena China had seen already for years as the most important platform for East Asian economic cooperation. Probably the best example of China’s success in separating the issues of economic integration and security concerns in Southeast Asia can be seen in the Free Trade Area it achieved with the ASEAN in 2010 despite its simultaneous more assertive role performance.

During the years between 17th and 18th CCP Party Congresses (2007 and 2012), Southeast Asia experienced the return of the great powers: firstly, there was

the United States' 'Pivot to Asia,' bringing the renewed interest of the world's only superpower to the region. This U.S. policy shift clashed with that of another, new great power, China, which was just experiencing a role change and was, after a break of hundreds of years, once again starting to behave more like a regional hegemon itself, even as it emphasised the benign nature of its great power role. A role conflict of this magnitude had to be solved somehow, and China's solution can be explained through role adaptation.

4.3. Conclusions: Adapting the Role of a Great Power

China's earlier, sometimes even contradictory role enactments, combined with the political diversity of Southeast Asia, have made it almost impossible for China to have a single, unitary role towards the region that would both serve Chinese "core interests" and not antagonise the countries involved. Moreover, it is hard to achieve and manage a coherent and compatible role set related to several different, and not necessarily complementary, policy issues towards the Southeast Asian nations while territorial disputes such as the ones China faces on the South China Sea are ongoing. This has even more been the case after China's reformist policies that emphasise pragmatic roles such as *good neighbour* (Canivet and Beylerian 1997: 202), leading eventually to the peripheral diplomacy of the 1990s, and to China's role of an economic integrator described above.

In the 2000s, together with the emergence of the new great power role conception, China has had to once more rethink its role enactment towards Southeast Asia. The simultaneous processes of China's Rise, overall economic integration in the region and the escalation of the South China Sea disputes have resulted in an almost classical conflict between the ego and alter expectations towards China's roles: how to hold onto the roles of *good friend* and *good neighbour* as well as *economic integrator* and even *benefactor*, while going against the expectations of the neighbours in question in issues such as security, especially outside the field of non-traditional security issues? Moreover, while the Chinese domestic opinion has not previously been expressing strong opinions on issues such as the South China Sea, the identity shift described by Wang Junsheng (2010: 41)

as “healthy great power mentality” [健康大国心态] will have an impact on China’s national role conception towards Southeast Asia, too, as became visible during the latest instances of anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia and Vietnam, and the subsequent demands in China for the Chinese government to take stronger action towards the countries in question.

In the early 2000s, China’s role development in the context of Southeast Asia followed roughly the same pattern as in Central Asia. During the early years of the Hu Jintao era, beginning in 2002, China was more cooperative and less dominant, and in the case of Southeast Asia this was even more clearly the case. China, using the Premier Wen Jiabao as the main channel of role statements, was emphasising its former foreign policy role built on the concept of peripheral diplomacy, emphasising multilateral cooperation as well as friendly relations with the neighbouring countries. This also meant that China was ready to accept the ASEAN as a mediator of some kind in the South China Sea disputes, exemplified by treaties such as the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, signed in 2002, as well as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, which China signed in 2003. Most likely, the new Chinese leaders felt that development similar to Central Asia, where territorial disputes were possible to solve in pace with the deepening of overall regional cooperation in the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, would be possible in Southeast Asia as well.

However, while in the case of Southeast Asia China’s national role conception did develop largely the same way as in Central Asia, combining an identity shift with changes in the country’s capabilities (increasing economic, military and political power of China) and with opportunities to enact according to the ego expectations arising from this NRC (such as 2004 tsunami, 2006–2007 avian influenza and 2007–2008 financial crisis), the maritime territorial disputes on the South China Sea resulted in a role conflict, where China’s great power role was not met with matching alter expectations: many Southeast Asian neighbours saw China’s rise to include security risks not balanced out by the economic opportunities related to it. Thus, while for a short time China seemed to be learning the role of a great power through a process largely similar to the one it experienced

in its western borders, this was in the long term untenable. The new role of China was not as warmly welcomed in Southeast Asia as in Central Asia for various reasons: while in economic terms China's growth was indeed beneficial to many Southeast Asian nations, many countries in the area (especially the ones involved in the South China Sea disputes) felt the need to resist and balance the increasing Chinese power with, for example, supporting the return of the U.S. troops to the region. Perhaps China's new role of a great power resembled too much the ancient tributary system, familiar (while not necessary historically real) to countries such as Vietnam that were already concerned about the security implications of China's increasing power. The repeated assurances of China's benign intentions by Premier Wen Jiabao were clearly not enough to convince countries amidst territorial disputes, in which China repeatedly showed its unilateral tendencies. And due to the consensus-seeking nature of the ASEAN, China saw a danger that the issue of South China Sea would, through the resistance of certain member states, derail the economic integration process in Southeast Asia, the primary goal of its new role.

In addition, and again in contrast to Central Asia, many Southeast Asian states had by the time of China's rise already found themselves a development model that was not as dependent on their big neighbour. While this did not necessarily make them outrightly hostile towards the increasing Chinese power, it increased the likelihood of alter expectations in conflict with Beijing's ego expectations related to China's roles. China's territorial disputes with several ASEAN member countries in the region add to this already complicated situation. China's increased assertiveness, seemingly following apace with its increasing material capabilities, and together with the previous examples of China's hegemonic or otherwise intrusive role enactment, served as a warning to all those countries not willing to accept China's seeming superiority in Southeast Asia.

To counter these negative alter expectations towards the Chinese great power role, as well as the role conflict arising from the contradictory needs to achieve further economic integration in Southeast Asia while gaining more sovereignty over the South China Sea, China's *role learning* in Southeast Asia in the 2000s was quickly followed by a process of *role adaptation*. As discussed in

chapter 2, role adaptation refers to a situation where a country keeps its role but changes the strategies and patterns related to its actual behaviour, or role enactment. The Chinese process of role change into the role of a great power, followed by the adaptation of this new role to the situation in Southeast Asia matches this definition very well.

In the case of Southeast Asia, during the time between the 16th and 18th Party Congresses of the CCP, China tried to hold to its new great power role and manage the conflicts emerging from the seemingly contradictory policies related to this role: while slowly but steadily moving away from the spirit of the treaties it signed in 2002 and 2003, China has repeatedly stated that it wishes to implement these treaties in the future. While calling for the ASEAN a “leading role” in the East Asian integration process, China has at the same time built fault lines within the organisation with an almost classical divide and rule approach, making itself and its great power role beneficial and attractive to countries with no claims in the territorial disputes. And lastly, while calling for more cooperation in the region even in issues that include security questions, China has clearly wished to leave the ‘outsiders’ such as the United States, the Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration or even the United Nations (and the UNCLOS) outside the negotiations related to the South China Sea.

Simultaneously with the economic push, China was side-lining not only those countries in the ASEAN antagonistic to it, but also the whole issue of territorial disputes. While in the early 2000s China was still seeing the ASEAN as part of the solution to the South China Sea disputes, it later changed its mind and saw it necessary to restrict the role of the ASEAN to economic and non-traditional security issues, on which most if not all regional governments were more likely to see eye to eye. By doing this China was ensuring that the ASEAN, the most important institution for economic integration, would not become antagonistic towards China.

Moreover, throughout his time as the Premier of China, Wen Jiabao engaged in a continuous process of adapting China’s role of a great power into a more acceptable one for to those countries of Southeast Asia not directly involved in the

South China Sea disputes. The key in this process has been to frame China as a *different* kind of a great power from those the world has seen before. As a great power, China was respecting the sovereignty of its partners, aiming for common development, and was not seeking hegemony. This message was repeated in slightly different forms time after time in every ASEAN summit Premier Wen attended during his ten-year tenure. Occasionally, as in 2012 (Liu 2012b; Wang 2010), this difference in the roles of the previous great powers and that of China was explained through the Chinese culture, historical experiences and sense of belonging: China was inherently a peaceful culture that had – like the Southeast Asian nations – been invaded and subjugated by imperial powers in the past. That made China understand the grievances of the victims of great powers and prevented it from becoming one itself, regardless of its own actions “outside” of the ASEAN.

Thus, I suggest that while in principle China’s adapted role of a great power is very similar to the one it learned in Central Asia, there are notable differences in the case of Southeast Asia that make China’s process of role learning to be immediately followed by a one of role adaptation. The main difference is, as stated above, the relentless countering of the “China Threat” discourse, perceived as a challenge by for example Dao Shulin and Zhai Kun (2002: 9) and quoted earlier in this chapter, and fuelled by China’s assertive and unilateral policies on the South China Sea. The Chinese leadership is well aware of the concerns of China’s neighbours and have tried to assuage them accordingly. However, due to China’s historical roles in the region, the already institutionalised nature of the ASEAN, the established sovereignties of the Southeast Asian nations, as well as the strong security linkages to the United States by some of them, China’s role change in Southeast Asia has not been easy for Beijing, forcing China to adapt its new role.

Furthermore, as the territorial disputes on the South China Sea have proven themselves much more difficult to solve than those in Central Asia, the disputes have undermined the role adaptation process even further. By painting these disputes with same historical brush the Chinese Communist Party has used elsewhere, the islands of the South China Sea and their possible territorial waters have also become an issue much more closely related to the Chinese national

role conception: by linking the sovereignty over the South China Sea with its “core interests” China has made it much more difficult for itself to compromise in the manner it did in Central Asia.⁸⁷ And this, subsequently, makes the other nations involved more concerned about the rising China. Beijing has not been able to escape the fact that roles, as social positions of a country, are mutually constituted by the country’s national role conception as well as the ego and alter expectations towards that country’s roles. However, the problems China’s role change has met, in trying to bring these expectations in conformity in Southeast Asia, are nowhere as severe as in Beijing’s relationship with Tokyo, the case I will turn to in the following chapter.

⁸⁷ However, the importance of the South China Sea is clearly below that of Taiwan, which is mentioned as “part of the sacred territory” of the PRC even in the Constitution of China (PRC 1999: 5). The difference between interest and identity is clear here. Of the latter, negotiations aiming for concessions are impossible.

5. ALTERCASTING A ROLE OF AN AGGRESSOR: CHINA AND JAPAN

Of all of China's neighbouring countries, its relationship with Japan is undoubtedly the most complicated and hence, most difficult to analyse. The reasons for this are numerous: firstly, the history between the two countries takes the observer back over thousand years. Secondly, even among the numerous nations taking advantage of China's internal difficulties from the mid-19th century onwards, the actions of Japan stand out unparalleled. Thirdly, the position of Japan in the Cold-War security apparatus of the United States made China naturally antagonistic towards it, a disposition that has continued, as has the cooperation between Japan and the US. And lastly, the rapid economic development of China after the Cold War has turned the pattern of interdependence between the two countries upside down, a development which has not escaped notice either in China or Japan. All these factors are in play when studying the roles of China towards Japan.

I start this third and final case of my study by comparing the Sino-Japanese relations to the previous two. While China's roles towards Central and Southeast Asia bear plenty of similarities to those towards Japan, there are notable differences as well. The case of Japan, I will argue, stands out for several reasons, which will be discussed shortly. Next, I will look into China's historical roles towards Japan. While the aim of this work is not to trace the details in the historical development of the Sino-Japanese relations, it is still necessary to go through the main stepping stones of this long and "tortuous" road with "twists and turns" [劲雨煦风], as described by the former Foreign Minister of China Tang Jiaxuan (2009). Furthermore, as the historical understanding of both the self and other are important parts of any country's national role conception (see chapter 2.4 of this study), the Chinese view, albeit subjective, on the historical issues between China and Japan is still meaningful for this study.

As with the two other cases of my research, a major problem in the relations between China and Japan has to do with territorial disputes, or at least one specific dispute, and a short introduction of the issue of Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands is thus

necessary. Also, before getting to the actual analysis of China's role development towards Japan in the era of Hu Jintao, which forms the main part of this chapter, I will focus on one component of national role conception that is especially important in this particular bilateral relationship: Chinese domestic opinion. But first, to the comparison between Japan and the two other cases of this study.

Starting with the obvious, Japan is only one country, not a group of countries. That means there are fewer possibilities for the divide-and-rule approach which was visible for example in China's Southeast Asian policy. On the other hand, it means that the alter expectations towards China are likely more coherent when coming from Japan, than when they come from several different nations. China also lacks the multilateral organisations that it could use to promote its agenda directly with Japan. Although both China and Japan are involved in the ASEAN+3 process, the APEC and the ARF, this hardly compares to the 'bilateral' China-ASEAN dialogue, not to mention to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, since the focus there is not the Sino-Japanese integration or cooperation.

Japan is also a highly developed, modern, industrialised country with a high standard of living. That makes Japan less vulnerable in economic terms, and also less dependent on China when compared to, for example, the small Central Asian republics. In military terms, Japan not only possesses one of the largest defence budgets in the world, but it is also a close military ally of the United States, a deterrence almost guaranteed to rule out Chinese military means in solving bilateral problems between China and Japan in the near future.

Thirdly, as will be discussed later in this chapter, due to the problematic history between China and Japan, the domestic opinion in both countries often runs against political *rapprochement* in a manner resembling vertical role contestation. Especially in China the 'national sentiments' [*guomin gaqing*, 国民感情] occasionally force political leaders to continue their strong rhetoric when discussing Japanese actions in the 20th-century East Asia, or the importance given to those actions in contemporary discussion. But Japan, too, has its domestic politics influencing the way China and its 21st-century rise is discussed, especially among the more right-leaning Liberal-Democratic Party that has controlled the Japanese

Cabinet through most of the post-WWII era. However, as is the case in most of China's foreign relations, the view of Japan in the context of Chinese national roles goes far beyond the turbulent last century.

5.1. China's Historical Roles towards Japan

The late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai famously referred to the Sino-Japanese relations as “2000 years of friendship and 50 years of problems,” a phrase still often quoted by the Chinese leadership in the 21st century (see e.g. Tang 2011c). In its simplicity, the saying catches many of the main problems between China and Japan while leaving enough room for interpretation. The official Chinese explanation has been that the recent problems with Japan should be put in the context of a long, amicable relationship between the two countries. While such an interpretation implies that the more recent problems are merely minor incidents, everybody understands that this is not the case: against the background of this “2000 years of friendship,” or any previous Sino-Japanese conflicts, Japan's actions in the first half of the 20th century can be seen as even more aggressive.

Another, more recent Japanese version of this viewpoint exists, too. Incumbent Deputy Prime Minister of Japan, Taro Aso, when discussing China during his 2013 visit to India, gave a his own opinion on the matter: “India shares a land border with China, and Japan has had maritime contacts [with China], but for the past 1,500 years and more there has never been a history when our relations with China went extremely smoothly” (SCMP 2013). While Aso's comments have to be seen in the context of the then drastically escalated dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, it also shows that the image of the amicable 2000 years between China and Japan, as presented by the Chinese side, is not shared by everybody.

Another way of interpreting the idea behind Zhou's saying is that the Chinese premier wanted to remind the Japanese about the fact that their nation is a newcomer as a major power, and that the rise of Japan, both before and after the WWII, has been a big problem for China. Even excluding the direct confrontations between the two countries, the role of Japan as a major economic power as well as

an indispensable part of the United States' military presence in East Asia are enough to make the Chinese leadership see their maritime neighbour in at least dubious, if not openly hostile light.

As both the Chinese and Japanese centralised states have existed for a very long time,⁸⁸ the bilateral relations between the two are, of course, extensive. As is the case with all the neighbours of China, for a long time the economic, cultural and political influences tended to flow out of China, and less in the opposite direction. Many aspects of later Japanese culture originated in, or at least were conveyed by China, including Buddhism, tea, and of course, the writing system. Up until the Ming-Dynasty (1368–1644), Japan sent dozens of delegations to the Chinese court, missions at least interpreted as tribute by the Chinese – according to the traditional *tianxia* worldview and role.

In this ancient era China enacted its role as the regional hegemon with very little opposition.⁸⁹ The fact that China never conquered Japan did not matter for the Chinese themselves, as in the Sinocentric world order China was the centre of the world that did not need to extend its power through military means. As was the case both with Central and Southeast Asia, China's superiority in comparison to Japan was seen as the natural order of things and as the trade with China through the tribute system was profitable, Japan saw no need to struggle against this, except during open warfare such as Kublai Khan's attempts to conquer Japan during the 13th century. On the surface this pattern of interaction was upheld until the Japanese invasion of Korea in the late 16th century, after which Japan minimised its contacts to the rest of the world for a quarter of a millennium, due to the isolationist policies of the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate.

Japan's re-emergence on the international stage took place at the same time with the decline of the Chinese empire during the 19th century. Indeed, Japan had a major role during the latter half of China's 'century of humiliation,' as it defeated

⁸⁸ Chinese centralized state was created in the 3rd century BCE, Japanese in the 8th century CE.

⁸⁹ As discussed in the chapter 2, the traditional hegemonic role of China included major role conflicts that were kept hidden with the complicated pattern of interactions between the Chinese court and neighbouring states.

China in the 1st Sino-Japanese War in 1894–1895 and annexed parts of China in the first decades of the 20th century, until it was defeated in the Second World War. Moreover, for the Chinese, the problems with Japan did not end with its surrender: the immediate occupation of Japan by the U.S. forces and the consequent Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, signed in 1952 after the Treaty of San Francisco, was itself a cause for major disappointment for the Chinese, who had become opposed to the United States after the communist revolution in China in 1949.

Against this background Zhou Enlai's phrase of 2000 years of happiness followed by 50 years of misfortune tells a story of a major role conflict. When China was able to enact the role it had occupied for hundreds of years, the relationship between China and Japan was seen as amicable, and the role sets in both countries were considered coherent. When it becomes clear that neither China nor Japan is acting in those roles anymore, the Chinese premier sees the situation as a misfortune.

Today, China's relationship with Japan continues to be mired in role conflicts: even with dramatically increased economic, political and military power, China is not able to dominate Japan, itself a major economic power but also a close ally of the U.S. and thus under its military umbrella. Moreover, in the eyes of China, Japan, or at least some aspects of the Japanese society, continues to dismiss the wrongdoings committed during the war. This lack of "proper handling of history" [妥善处理历史] is a recurring theme in the messages sent by the Chinese leaders to their Japanese counterparts (see e.g. Tang 2010d). This kind of rhetoric cannot be in other contexts, such as when Chinese leaders are talking to their American or European colleagues, even though they, too, represent nations involved in acts aimed at subjugating China during the "century of humiliation." The crimes of Japan are considered unparalleled.

However, the 1970s was time a *rapprochement* between China and Japan. The diplomatic relations established in 1972 were followed by the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People's Republic of China in 1978. China, earlier enacting in several contradictory roles such as "bastion of revolution," "anti-imperialist agent" and "regional collaborator" (Holsti 1970: 274, see also chapter

2.4.4 of this study) was beginning to strip down its most aggressive roles and looking for more pragmatic foreign relations.

The 1980s saw again some controversial events between China and Japan, such as a dispute over Japanese history textbooks as well as the visit of Prime Minister Nakasone to Yasukuni Shrine⁹⁰ in 1985, which were followed by anti-Japanese demonstrations in China that made Prime Minister Nakasone to cancel further Yasukuni visits (Weiss 2014: 82). However, the overall relations between the countries developed well through the 1980s and 1990s. Even the violent crackdown of the Tian'anmen Square protests in 1989 seemed to cause only a slight delay in the increasing economic interdependence, as Japan was quick to remove the economic sanctions that were set in the aftermath of the bloodshed, resulting in bilateral trade worth USD 20bn already in 1991 (Tan 2013: 67). This did not go unnoticed, and as late as in 2008, for example, the then Foreign Minister of China Yang Jiechi reminded his audience that it was in fact Japan who took lead in this “recovery” of China amidst the western sanctions (Yang 2008).

During the leadership of Jiang Zemin (1989–2002) China began investing heavily on its peripheral diplomacy, but met only limited success with Japan. As Japan at the same time intensified its security cooperation with the United States (Lanteigne 2016: 159), the self-proclaimed Chinese role of working to undermine the U.S.-dominated unilateral world order was in this case in direct conflict with the other role, growing from the peripheral diplomacy, of developing an economically more integrated East Asia. Another obstacle on the road to closer relations with Japan was the Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, whose frequent visit to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine angered not only Jiang and China, but also people in several other countries of East Asia that had been occupied by Japan during the war. This issue was to cast its shadow on the Sino-Japanese relations

⁹⁰ Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, while established for the memory of all those that have died in the service of Japan since the Meiji Restoration of 1869, also enshrines several Class A war criminals of the Second World War and has later become a powerful symbol of Japan's wartime past for different sections of society both in and outside Japan.

during the leadership of Hu Jintao, too: identifying itself as a wartime victim was too large a part of the Chinese national role conception to let the issue lie.

5.1.1. The Territorial Dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands

Unlike in the other two cases of this study, the relationship between China and Japan would be problematic even without the territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. However, this dispute, too, has its origin in the problematic history between China and Japan, especially during the half a century starting in mid-1890s. More recently in the 2000s the dispute has intensified significantly, making it an even more significant issue for China, as the country is trying to enact its new role as a great power. However, and as is the case with the other two cases of this study, I do not aim to discuss the details of the territorial dispute itself, but instead use it to frame the issue of China's role change, and to enable a meaningful comparison with the other two cases. While it can be argued that there are other aspects of the relationship between China and Japan that could be used to explain China's role change, the linkages between territorial disputes and the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, as discussed in the introduction of this study, support my focus on this already well-known case.

As with the islands of the South China Sea, China sees its right to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands to derive from an era when East Asian states did not see it necessary to define their territories as strictly as is the case today. However, both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) claim that the islands have been part of China since at least the 16th century. Japan, however, disagrees with this position and claims that islands were without control until the late 19th century, when Japan acquired control over Okinawa and, according to the Japanese view, the islands that were still at the point *terra nullius*, 'nobody's land.' In fact, according to the official view of Japan, there is not even any dispute over the ownership of the islands. This position has only aggravated the Chinese side, which sees it as another example of Japan "not handling the history properly," even though the willingness of the Chinese leaders to accept the Japanese apologies so far has been questioned, too (Spitzer 2012).

After the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, Japan annexed Taiwan, and its control over the now disputed islands, confirmed in the Treaty of Shimonoseki between China and Japan in 1895, was made even stronger. However, at the end of the Second World War, Japan agreed to relinquish its control over vast areas of land it has annexed or otherwise taken under its control between 1895 and 1945. The islands south of 29 degrees of north latitude ended under the control of the United States military, as decreed in the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty. The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands were not specifically mentioned in the treaty, and due to the timing of the conference (which took place amidst the Korean War and very soon after the Chinese revolution of 1949) neither the People’s Republic of China nor the Republic of China (Taiwan) were invited to the conference (Suganuma 2015: 65–69).

In fact, it is the Treaty of San Francisco itself that is, in the eyes of the Chinese, the origin of the issue with Diaoyu Islands. Due to the turmoils of the Chinese civil war and the subsequent omission of Chinese representation from the conference, the Chinese leadership, on both sides of the Taiwan Strait did not accept the handing over of the islands to U.S. control. The U.S. occupation continued until 1972, when the islands south of 29th parallel north were returned to the Japanese. In the eyes of the Chinese, the inclusion of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in this agreement is invalid (*ibid.*).

In the meantime, the report by Kenneth O. Emory (1970) had cast light on the potentially enormous natural resources in the seabed close to the disputed islands. However, during this general era of *rapprochement* between China and the West (as well as Japan), China did not want to push the issue. Instead, during this “honeymoon period” [*miyueqi*, 蜜月期] between China and Japan (Lu 2002: 1), both Zhou Enlai (in 1972) and Deng Xiaoping (in 1978) expressed their wish not to discuss it with the Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka or Foreign Minister Sonoda, respectively (Tang 2012b). This shelving of the dispute lasted for decades, interrupted only by occasional incidents. The problem, however, has not dissolved, but resurfaced again in the 2000s.

During the last few decades, the island dispute has become increasingly fuelled by the domestic politics in both China and Japan. As explained by James Manicom (2014: 45–46), it has been used by different political factions, such as nationalists in Japan and Deng Xiaoping in China, to boost their own image as strong politicians without creating an open conflict between the two countries. For example, Deng Xiaoping's maneuver in the late 1970s, in the form of a fleet of Chinese fishing vessels approaching the disputed islands, was re-used by the Chinese in 2010.

The most recent period of more heated exchange between China and Japan started in September 2010, when a captain of a Chinese fishing vessel was detained by the Japanese authorities following an incident in which the fishing vessel collided with a Japanese coastal guard ship in the waters surrounding the disputed islands. When the detained captain was released after strong protests by the Chinese authorities, many saw this as a diplomatic victory for China (Tiezzi 2014a). Thus, when in April 2012 the mayor of Tokyo, known for his right-wing policies and nationalist sympathies, declared that he was planning to buy the disputed islands from their private Japanese owner, Japanese government intervened by nationalising the islands, allegedly to prevent their use in ways that might anger the Chinese. Unfortunately, the purchase of the islands by the Japanese government incensed the Chinese even more.

In addition to the strong diplomatic response, the number of Chinese vessels, both civilian and military, approaching the disputed islands increased dramatically in 2012. While activists from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong (as well as their Japanese counterparts) have had the habit of occasionally trying to hoist their respective national flags on the disputed islands in order to symbolically claim sovereignty over them, the “fishing vessel policy” used by Deng Xiaoping's China in 1978 reached new levels in 2012–2013: when earlier the number of approaching Chinese vessels was around 0–3 monthly, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry (MOFA 2016), the number increased to 20–30 monthly after summer 2012, and although it decreased to 5–10 per month in late 2013, it has not returned to the pre-summer 2012 levels.

Furthermore, in November 2013 China declared an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over an area of the East China Sea, containing the disputed islands. While China has not so far enforced the zone and the aerial activity has remained mostly unchanged, the Chinese public reacted to the declaration of the zone positively (Hong 2013). This obviously raises the question whether the move was done only in order to influence the domestic opinion, known to be strong in issues related to Japan, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

There is one more aspect of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute giving it additional importance in the eyes of the Chinese leaders: the Taiwan issue. While the Republic of China (Taiwan) has announced that it has no stake in the current dispute, it has not backed away from its original demand over the control of the islands. In fact, the general demands of Taipei and Beijing are largely compatible: they both see the disputed islands to be part of the northernmost township of Taiwan. The difference lies in the status of Taiwan itself, whether it is a country (Republic of China) or part of one (Taiwan Province of the PRC).

As has been argued in this study, by the time the territorial dispute over Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands resurfaces in 2010, China has already assumed a role of a great power. Moreover, as noted by Manicom (2014: 60), the strong reaction of China in 2010 was a sign of the need for the Chinese leadership to pay attention to the Chinese ‘national sentiment’, a topic also discussed in this study. From the role theory point of view the question of Taiwan brings forth an additional aspect that cannot be ignored. As the issue of “reunification” between Taiwan and the mainland China is a major part in the “never again” narrative of the Chinese Communist Party, it is thus also a part of the party’s overall legitimacy to rule China. Thus, when analysing the Chinese national role conception and Chinese roles towards Japan, the dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands is not only a question related to the Chinese identity as a war-time victim, but also to the power of the Chinese domestic audience. And, as will be discussed in the following, the importance of the domestic opinion in the contemporary China especially in the context of Japan should not be underestimated.

5.1.2. Domestic Opinion

The final issue setting the case of Japan apart from the other two in this study is the impact of the domestic opinion on the issues of both the territorial disputes as well as the general bilateral relationship between China and Japan. In fact, one can argue that in the case of Central Asia the Chinese domestic opinion or ‘national sentiment’ has very little, if any, influence on the national role conception of China. The same has applied to Southeast Asia, although (as discussed in the previous chapter) this seems to be changing, and loud sections of the Chinese people are becoming more vocal in demanding their government to take action against e.g. countries that are unable – or unwilling – to protect the overseas Chinese minorities, or which engage themselves in the disputes over South China Sea. In the case of Japan, however, such domestic pressures are nothing new.

While this study is not based on personal observations, I myself experienced the power of domestic opinion on Japan first hand when living in China 2011–2013, during the heating of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute: while my hometown Shanghai experienced no protests on the scale of, for example, Shenzhen, local sushi restaurants found it necessary to display Chinese flags in their windows to prevent them being smashed. In the end, vandalism experienced in some other Chinese cities did not spread to Shanghai, and in contrast to previous occasions, many people felt that this time the local governments in China had been trying to prevent the demonstrations instead of fuelling them. In fact, and due to the reasons presented at the beginning of this chapter, the domestic opinion of the Chinese people has been part of China’s national role conception towards Japan for a long time, and therefore it also influences China’s actual foreign policy, both on the rhetorical level and through the actions of the Chinese people towards issues perceived as Japanese.

Even while I argue in the following that the impact of the domestic opinion on the Chinese foreign policy roles towards Japan grew during the era of Hu Jintao (2002–2012), it was already strong to begin with in the early 2000s. As Susan Shirk (2008: 177) describes the ‘New Thinking’ debate in 2002–2003, when Ma

Licheng⁹¹ (supported by professor Shi Yinhong of Renmin University) called for a “mature and confident” attitude towards Japan, the Chinese public reaction to the idea of was “vicious,” making the Chinese top leadership hesitate. While Shirk, among others, suggests that the original ‘New Thinking’ article might have been a “test ball” from the political leadership,⁹² at least Shi Yinhong (2015) denies this. Test ball or not, it made clear to the Chinese top leadership that a soft attitude towards Japan would be difficult to sell to the citizens of China. Moreover, in an online chat during the aftermath of the “New Thinking” debate in 2003, the then Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, referring to the Chinese public, explained that the Chinese leadership “takes such concerns seriously” (Reilly 2010: 54), effectively ending the public ‘smile campaign’ towards Japan. While not all sections of the Chinese society are as negative towards Japan as e.g. the rural population and the Communist Party members (Sinkkonen 2013), it is not an exaggeration to say that the overall Chinese domestic opinion about Japan is indeed very negative.

Not even the new leaders Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, with less historic baggage, and Hu with his 1980s Communist Youth League connections to Japan, were able to make significant changes to this underlying negative attitude. While the bilateral relationship between China and Japan did get better during the first decade of the 21st century, culminating in Hu Jintao’s 2008 visit to Japan, the positive developments did not last for long and were undone again by the renewed dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands that was met with widespread demonstrations in major Chinese cities as well as a furious response by millions of Chinese netizens.

All the three ‘Japanese’ issues infuriating the Chinese public (the history textbooks, the Yasukuni Shrine, and the dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands) are related to the Second World War and its aftermath. Thus, it is reasonable to say that the radical differences in the understanding of their respective roles in history,

⁹¹ For a detailed account of the debate provoked in China by Ma Licheng (a liberal writer then working at Communist Party newspaper 人民日报 [People’s Daily]), see Gries (2005b).

⁹² It is widely believed that the CCP occasionally uses academics to publicize new, hypothetical policies to find out the public reaction to them. If the ideas are received positively, they can be adopted by the leaders while in the opposite case they are quietly withdrawn.

combined with the similarities in the ways history is used in identity-building in both China and Japan, have a strong influence on the national role conception in both countries. It is hardly surprising that the same three conflicts also become focal points for China's role change and enactment. In fact, the use of history becomes *the* feature of role change in the form of altercasting.

In the following section, therefore, I will trace the development of China's national role conception towards Japan, especially in the context of its territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. As will become clear, the impact of national identity and the domestic opinion are much more prominent here than in the other two cases discussed in this study, further supporting the claim that in the eyes of the Chinese public, relationship with Japan is an exceptionally heated issue. Indeed, in the case of Japan the domestic opinion, constructed on the historical self-understanding as a victim, is a distinct building block of China's national role conception. This is hardly what the Chinese decision-makers would have wished, as it limits their space to manoeuvre in foreign policy, and makes a 'smile-diplomacy' similar to the early 2000s (Shirk 2008: 167) difficult in the near future.

5.2. China's Role Change towards Japan

Apart from the bilateral nature of the territorial dispute on the East China Sea and the Chinese domestic opinion, in the context of this study there is one additional, more empirical issue making the case of Japan slightly different from the two others: the available research material. While the leaders of the two countries tend to meet regularly, these meetings are usually informal and take place in the outskirts of bigger multilateral events such as the ASEAN+3 or the APEC summits. Moreover, these meetings are not public and are often followed with only very limited press releases. Meetings that would take place in public and where the national leader would give speeches that are later published, as is the case in the two other cases of this study, are rare. An important exception to this rule comes with Hu Jintao's 2008 state visit to Japan, preceded by Wen Jiabao's preparatory visit the same year: these two events are marked with several speeches by both leaders.

Thus, in the absence of regular speeches by the top leaders, one has to look into other sources of Chinese role statements regarding Japan. In this, the speeches and statements of former Foreign Minister (1998–2003), later State Councillor (2003–2008) Tang Jiaxuan become especially valuable.⁹³ Even more so since in the absence of annual official meetings between the national leaders, The New China-Japan Friendship Committee for the 21st Century,⁹⁴ established in 2003 and co-chaired by Tang Jiaxuan, takes an important position in the form of track-two diplomacy between the two countries. According to his own words, Tang had a special relationship with Japan ever since his first visit to the country as an interpreter to a Chinese secret delegation in 1972 (Tang 2010c). Several of Tang's speeches take place in the context of this committee, and as he no longer served in the official State Council capacity after 2008, he was able to speak more freely. However, the fact that several of the speeches are available on the Chinese Foreign Ministry website underline the importance of his position even after retirement, and give the stamp of official approval at least to these specific speeches.

I have divided the time frame of this study (2002–2012) again in three phases. The first, lasting until approximately 2006, is marked by the Chinese attempt to manage with the administration of Junichiro Koizumi, who served as the premier of Japan between 2001 and 2006. Koizumi advocated and executed active, U.S.-supporting foreign policy, and made repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, clearly annoying both the Chinese leadership and the public.⁹⁵

The second phase, lasting from 2006 to 2010 started when after Koizumi the premiership of Japan was taken up by Shinzō Abe in September 2006. During this time the relations between China and Japan improved remarkably. Abe,

⁹³ State Councillors [*guowuweiyuan*, 国务委员], numbering between five and eleven, rank between ministers and vice-premiers, making them influential advisors to the top leadership. Many former ministers have served in this capacity.

⁹⁴ A continuation of a similar committee of the 1980s and 1990s, this group met altogether 11 times between 2003 and 2011, and after a short break in 2012 continued their meetings in 2013 (MOFA 2014).

⁹⁵ A detailed, if one-sided, account of China's diplomacy related to Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine can be found in Tang Jiaxuan's memoirs (2009: 3–41). It is also good to remember that Tang's memoirs were published during a warmer period in Sino-Japanese relations.

although a nationalistic politician, saw it necessary to develop better ties with China and did not visit Yasukuni during his first premiership. Moreover, he embarked on a famous ‘ice-breaking’ visit to China in October 2006, immediately after taking up office, and was applauded by the Chinese because of this. Although Abe retired from the premiership after only 12 months, his work carried fruit as it was continued by his successor Yasuo Fukuda (incumbent September 2007–September 2008), and to some extent even Taro Aso (September 2008–September 2009) and Yukio Hatayama (September 2009–June 2010). The relationship kept improving also with the visits of both Wen Jiabao and Hu Jintao to Japan in 2008, called “ice-breaking” and “ice-melting” respectively (Wen 2008).

The third phase, from 2010 onwards, saw the deterioration of the relationship on several levels. The great power role of China (underlined by China surpassing Japan as the second largest economy in the world), formulated and put to practise in Central Asia (chapter 3) and adapted in Southeast Asia (chapter 4) met with resistance in Japan. The fishing trawler collision in September 2010 brought the dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands back to the headlines, and the impact of the domestic opinion became clear in the Chinese national role conception. Later, the Chinese attempts to altercast Japan into a role of a historical aggressor received surprising (and unwanted) help from the Japanese government which nationalised the disputed islands in 2012, resulting in a strong Chinese reaction, again by both the leadership and the public.

5.2.1. Dancing with the Wolves

The 30th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between China and Japan (established in 1972) gave Chinese scholars opportunities to look into this relationship in more depth than before. In a detailed summary as well as a forecast of the relationship, by Lu Zhongwei, the then President of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), saw the future rise of China as a positive sign for the bilateral relation, as it would bring the comprehensive national

powers⁹⁶ of China and Japan closer to each other, creating “equilibrium” [*junheng*, 均衡]. In addition, the economic rise of China would create possibilities for the stalled Japanese economy, help in the process of East Asian integration, and give Japan more political manoeuvrability instead of being so closely tied to the United States (Lu 2002: 4–5). While the ideas of Lu hardly reflected the view on the rising China in Japan, they do portray the national role conception of China towards Japan, and more generally towards its neighbouring regions: China’s rise was a good thing, especially economically, but also because it works towards a more multilateral world and a balance of power in East Asia. However, China was still catching up on Japan, rather than being its equal: Lu (ibid: 6) also expected the Japan-US treaty to be downgraded in the future to a friendship treaty that China could join as well, on equal footing with the others.

Seeing the United States as a hindrance to East Asian economic and political integration is another example of China’s peripheral diplomacy, which criticised ‘hegemonism’ and the unipolar world order. However, changes were about to take place: according to Yang Bojiang, the then director of research on Northeast Asia at CICIR, China was ready to “dance with the wolves” [*yulang gongwu*, 与狼共舞], meaning the pursuit of common development with former adversaries (Yang 2003: 2). However, according to Yang this was not the only change in China as a nation: should Japan be willing to risk conflict with its Asian neighbours, China would not be the China of the past anymore, but a country with

plenty of self-confidence and strength, being able to deal with all challenges arising in this regard

[有充足的自信与力量, 完全可以应对在这方面可能出现的一切挑战]

(ibid: 3).

Hu Jintao took up his chairmanship of the CCP in late 2012 and the presidency of the PRC in early 2003, during another turbulent era in China-Japan relations: Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had almost immediately after stepping

⁹⁶ Comprehensive national power [*zonghe guoli*, 综合国力] is a Chinese attempt to quantify national power, including aspects of both hard and soft power.

into office in 2001 visited the Yasukuni Shrine and had shown no intent of stopping these visits, which angered the outgoing Chinese leader Jiang Zemin. Moreover, the 'New Thinking' debate, as discussed above, was giving the Chinese public an opportunity to voice their anger towards Japan, making it difficult to remedy the situation without clear signals from Japan. In this context, Koizumi's annual Yasukuni visits were seen as a signal of great clarity, but of the wrong kind.

However, a developing China that wished to emphasise its peripheral relations had no means to stop these visits, and could do little more than protest. The impact of the repeated visits to Yasukuni by Japanese leaders, especially Koizumi, was made clear in March 2003 by the soon-to-resign Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan: when asked about the Yasukuni issue by a reporter from NHK, Japan Broadcasting Corporation, Tang repeated that China wished to have "good-neighbourly and friendly relations with Japan." However, he added that

to conduct important exchange of visits at the top level successfully and effectively requires necessary conditions and these conditions need to be created... to visit the Yasukuni Shrine in one's official capacity is no small matter. To say the least, it reveals the attitude Japan's political figures have on the history of Japan's invasion against its Asian neighbours including China (Tang 2003).

But the new leadership of China was indeed ready to "dance with the wolves": while the bilateral visits between China and Japan were off the table due to the perceived attitude of Koizumi, the top leadership of China met him several times in the side-lines of other events. For example, Hu Jintao and Koizumi met twice in 2003: first in St. Petersburg in April, agreeing to establish The New China-Japan Friendship Committee for the 21st Century to improve the relations between China and Japan. Another meeting took place in Bangkok in October, when also Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao met the Japanese Prime Minister. A 2004 meeting between them was cancelled as Koizumi declared his next Yasukuni visit almost immediately after meeting Wen Jiabao in 2003, but the scheduled 2004 meeting with Hu Jintao did take place even amidst Chinese protests over Koizumi's repeated visits to Yasukuni (Griffith 2012: 16–17).

Thus, regardless of the Chinese anger over Koizumi's Yasukuni visits, China kept sending reconciliatory signals towards Japan. In April 2004, vice-Foreign Minister (soon the Chinese Ambassador to Japan and later Foreign Minister) Wang Yi gave a speech at a China Foreign Affairs University seminar on East Asian Community. According to Wang (2004) China was gradually participating more in regional cooperation after the end of Cold War, especially due to economic globalization and normalization of relations with Southeast Asian countries. Going further back in history, Wang reminded his audience of China's past, of the time when it had been "the centre of the regional order," a position (and role) it had lost due to the "decline and collapse of the [Chinese] national power" [历史上曾出现过以中国为中心的地区秩序, 后因国力衰落而瓦解]. Wang continued by referring to Japan's failure to create a regional order under the so-called Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere [*dadongya gonrongquan*, 大东亚共荣圈] during the Second World War, thus in essence giving a version of Zhou Enlai's "2000 years of friendship, 50 years of misfortune" speech.

However, according to Wang Yi, the future regional order of East Asia would see China and Japan working together. Unlike what "some media" believed, China and Japan were not striving for dominance. In fact, Wang (2004) welcomed Japan to act

as a member of Asia, to play according to their strengths for the development of Asia and to make their contribution to the promotion of East Asian cooperation.

[一些媒体认为中日在东亚合作中存在主导权之争, 我们没有这种想法, 而是欢迎日本作为亚洲的一员, 更多关注亚洲的发展, 发挥自身的优势, 为推进东亚合作做出贡献].

Moreover, to underline the mutually constitutive processes of economic cooperation and bilateral relations, Wang hoped to "promote East Asian cooperation through the Sino-Japanese coordination and promote Sino-Japanese relations through East Asian cooperation" [我们也希望通过中日协调推进东亚合作, 通过东亚合作促进中日关系] (ibid.). While not requiring for China a leading role in

the East Asian regional order, the links between the national power of China and the future of East Asia in Wang's speech were hard to miss: the mission and role of China was to create an economically integrated, prosperous East Asia, and while Japan, due to its militaristic approach, had failed in this task earlier, it was welcome to help.

Similar views, although with less emphasis on the importance of China, were expressed by Tang Jiaxuan in his keynote speech at the 3rd East Asia Forum in Beijing in October 2005. In a speech promoting further cooperation among the countries of East Asia, Tang (2005) supported the leading role of the ASEAN *and* the countries of East Asia in this endeavour [我们支持东盟和东亚国家在东亚合作进程中的主导作用]. China, in “a critical period of development” [关键的发展时期] was still “the biggest developing country in the region” [本地区最大的发展中国家] whose development was “inseparable” [离不开] from the “cooperation with East Asian countries” [东亚各国的合作]. As “an advocator, supporter and participant of East Asian cooperation” [作为东亚合作的倡导者, 支持者和参与者] China was “fully aware of its responsibilities and obligations in East Asian regional cooperation” [中国深知自己在东亚区域合作中的责任和义务], and willing to work with Japan and South Korea for these goals. In the eyes of the Chinese leadership in the first years of the 2000s, China was a developing country that, even though it had an important role in the continuing economic integration in East Asia, was not in the position to take the lead, at least for the moment.

This view of China's role was confirmed by Hu Jintao in a speech in the official ceremony commemorating the “Chinese People's Anti-Japanese War and the World Anti-Fascist War” on September 3rd the same year.⁹⁷ Linking the Chinese war efforts with contemporary development plans of the country, Hu used a large part of his speech to discuss China in the contemporary world. According to Hu (2005b), both China and Japan were “very influential countries” [重要影响的国家] both in contemporary Asia and in the world. China was continuing its “independent foreign policy of peace” and had “never sought hegemony, and never will in the

⁹⁷ The translations of Hu's commemoration speech of war are published on China.org.cn (2005).

future.” National sovereignty and reunification of Taiwan would not be compromised, though, as the “Chinese people love our country, and will always unswervingly safeguard national sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity, allowing no violation of it by any force” [中国人民热爱自己的国家, 始终坚定不移地维护国家主权, 领土完整和民族尊严, 决不允许任何势力侵犯]. Even the war against Japan was seen in a conciliatory light, as it had inflicted pain on both sides:

The war of aggression against China launched by Japanese militarism in modern times not only brought enormous calamity to the Chinese people, but also inflicted dire misery on the Japanese people.

[近代日本军国主义发动的侵略战争不仅给中国人民带来了深重灾难, 也使日本人民深受其害].

With a likely implied reference to the present Japanese Prime Minister with his unreasonable attitude, Hu (2005) also speaks of how “it was only a small group of Japanese militarists who planned and launched the war” and how many Japanese repented afterwards and helped to mend the relations between China and Japan. “Their conscience and courage are highly commendable” (ibid.). Those who felt differently (Koizumi) were still harming the relationship and hurting not only China, but many other nations as well:

However, it must be pointed out that for a long time, there have been forces in Japan that have categorically denied the aggressive nature of the war Japan launched against China and the crimes it committed, and have tried their best to whitewash its militarist aggression and call back the spirit of those Class A war criminals who have been condemned by history. Such actions have not only breached the Japanese Government's commitment regarding historical issues, but also shaken the political foundation of the Sino-Japanese relations, thus badly hurting the feelings of the Chinese and other Asian peoples concerned.

[但是, 必须指出的是, 长期以来, 日本国内总有一些势力矢口否认日本发动侵略战争的性质和罪行, 竭力美化军国主义战争, 并为已经被历史钉在耻辱柱上的甲级战犯扬幡招魂. 这些做法, 不仅违背了日本政府在历史问题上的承诺, 而且背离了中日关系的政治基础, 严重伤害了中国和亚洲有关国家人民的感情] (Hu 2005b).

Hu's stance in defending the feelings of not only the Chinese, but also other nations attacked by the Japanese in the war, was intended as supporting the more recent Chinese role as a stabiliser of the whole East Asia. Thus, he did not bring up the contemporary issue of Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, but instead mentioned both the Japanese attack on Taiwan in 1874 as well as the annexation of the island in 1895 when listing the attacks on China's "national sovereignty and territorial integrity" [国家主权和领土完整]. Moreover, according to Hu (2005b) this remembering of the past was not done in order to perpetuate hatred, but to "use history as a mirror and face the future" [不是要延续仇恨, 而是要以史为鉴, 面向未来]. After listing the wartime atrocities of Japan, the picture Hu's audience saw in the mirror of history was likely to be at least somewhat one-sided.

In the commemoration speech Hu (2005b) also reminded the Chinese that their country was still, and would remain "in the primary stage of socialism for a long time" [我国仍然处于并将长期处于社会主义初级阶段]. Hu (2005c) returned to this issue of development in his speech at the APEC CEO summit in November the same year. While talking about the impressive development of China, he reminded the audience that China was still a developing country with a large population, weak economic foundations and unbalanced development, and that it would require lot of hard work to keep progressing. China would, however, do this by remaining a committed and focused player while at the same time contributing both to the regional and global economic development. While certain of China's better future, in the first years of his presidency Hu had no delusions concerning the role of his country. At the China-Japan-Korea summit later in the same year, Wen Jiabao (2005a) reiterated the main points China had decided to emphasise: the long common history between China and the rest of East Asia was significant and the

development of East Asia could not be separated from the development of China. Moreover, to continue to bring down the then active China Threat discourse, Wen Jiabao repeated Hu Jintao's assurances: China was not even "seeking the leadership of the regional cooperation" [中国无意谋求地区合作的主导权].

Hu Jintao's 2005 speeches do not diverge from the common Chinese understanding of China, Japan, and East Asia at the time: China was still a developing nation but becoming an important driver of the world economy. In this process, and especially regarding East Asian economic integration, Japan could have an important role. But the insistence of (some) Japanese leaders to deny the historical wrongdoings of Japan were detrimental to this process, as it would show not only to China but also to other nations that Japan was not to be trusted. Only Japan could remedy this with more "proper" approach to its wartime past. China was extending a hand of friendship, but only a sincere neighbour could grasp it.

In this era, the issue of Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands was mostly kept away from the spotlight both in China and Japan. This was natural, as China was trying to warm up its relationship with Japan and the Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi received enough domestic credentials with his visits to Yasukuni Shrine. Increasing the stakes by bringing up the issue of the disputed islands was not in the interests of either country. This kind of thinking is also visible in the article of Lu Zhongwei, then Director of the CICIR and later Vice-Minister in the powerful Ministry of State Security with close links to the CICIR. According to Lu (2004: 3), territorial disputes were "directly linked to countries' self-esteem and national sentiments" [领土问题直接关系到国家的自尊和民族感情], and the use of private ownership (referring to the Japanese government's lease of the islands from the Koga family in 2002) and the recently changed US position in the issue were "not conducive to the settlement of the problem" [不利于问题的解决]. Thus, Lu was in practise calling for the (continuous) shelving of the issue, as the best outcome (i.e. China obtaining them) did not seem to be possible.

Cai Penghong from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences was even more open in his call for the continuous shelving of the dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. According to Cai (2005: 28), the fundamental reason

behind the dispute were the actions of the western powers, with which he refers to the United States' return of the islands to Japan. However, Japan was also to blame, and Cai links China's disputes with Japan with those Japan had with Korea, as by claiming sovereignty over Dokto and Diaoyu, Japan was trying to "negate its history of aggression" [否定其侵略历史] (ibid: 29). Interestingly, both Lu and Cai bring up the impact of the United States in the dispute: as it was not considered fruitful to antagonise Japan more, it was convenient to dilute the blame by addressing it to the U.S., too.

During the early years of Hu Jintao's presidency, China was still strongly attached to the roles deriving from the era of his successor, Jiang Zemin, and related to the peripheral diplomacy of the 1990s. Focus on economic development and economic cooperation as well as a search for a multipolar world order without too much emphasis on the rise of China (or 'peaceful rise,' soon changed into 'peaceful development') tell a story of a country uncertain of the ramifications of its own change. In the context of Japan, this meant that China was trying to convince its neighbour of its (unthreatening) rise while at the same time wooing Japan to cooperate with China in order to build an economically more integrated East Asia. However, the Chinese domestic opinion, calling for more assertive policies towards Japan, as well as the aggravation caused by repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by Junichiro Koizumi (easily interpreted as a Japanese alter expectation to let the wartime past remain a Japanese domestic issue), resulted in a major role conflict. As a way out, China had to yield to the domestic pressure, and made a change in the policies of Japan a prerequisite for further cooperation.

Remarks by Tang Jiaxuan (2003) and Hu Jintao (2005b) reveal that the Chinese leaders saw the person of the Japanese Premier, Junichiro Koizumi, as the biggest obstacle for the better relations between China and Japan in the first years of the 2000s. With his policies, Koizumi had become a focal point of China's attempts to altercast Japan as an unrepentant aggressor, a role that would mirror China's reasonable and cooperative policies aiming for a more prosperous East Asia. Thus, the 2006 leadership election of the liberal-democratic party in Japan and the subsequent stepping down of Koizumi gave a possibility for positive developments

both in China and Japan. The issue of Senkaku/Diaoyu was mainly discussed among the academics, who did not see China as being able to push Japan in the issue. While rising, China still lacked the capabilities that would have matched a more assertive role, which was already in conflict with the roles deriving from the *zhoubian*, peripheral, diplomacy.

5.2.2. Building Better Relations

Between 2006 and 2010 Japan had altogether six prime ministers. First four of them were from the Liberal-Democratic party, but they decided not to visit the Yasukuni Shrine. The following two, Yukio Hatoyama and Naoto Kan from the Democratic Party of Japan, also abstained from these controversial visits. In fact, after Koizumi's last visit as Prime Minister in August 2006, it would not be until six years later, in August 2012, that an incumbent Prime Minister of Japan (Shinzō Abe during his second tenure of the office) would visit Yasukuni. Ironically, the person to do this was the one whose own earlier conduct largely paved the way for the *rapprochement* between China and Japan.

In China, the 2006 change in the Japanese leadership was welcomed. While in a press conference in March 2006 Premier Wen Jiabao, answering to a question by a Japanese Kyodo News reporter, still blamed the Japanese leaders for the bad relations between the two countries and maintained that the relations should abide the principle of “learning from history and facing the future” [以史为鉴, 面向未来], he was also calling for a “strategic dialogue” [战略对话] as well as non-governmental exchanges and enhanced bilateral economic and trade relations (Wen 2006a). As the exit of Koizumi was already known, Wen was making openings for the next premier, whoever that would be.

In September 2006 the Liberal Democratic Party elected Shinzo Abe as the new president of the party, and thus as the successor of Koizumi as the Premier of Japan as well. Almost immediately after assuming the post of the Premier, in early October, he made an official visit to China. This visit was welcomed as “a turning point” by Hu Jintao and he reminded the public that the problems between China and Japan were largely due to “an ‘individual Japanese leader’ who ‘kept visiting

the war shrine”” (Gov.cn 2006), sending again a clear message: if Abe wanted to improve the relations between China and Japan, he should refrain from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. Other Chinese leaders such as Wen Jiabao and Wu Bangguo followed suit, calling Abe’s visit “a new leaf” and a “window of hope” (ibid.). It was clear that the Koizumi’s exit had created an opportunity for reconciliation, especially when Abe, too, was looking for better bilateral relations and extended an invitation for the Chinese leadership to visit Japan, an opening welcomed “in principle” by the Chinese hosts (ibid.).

In the following two years, underlining the turn for the better in Sino-Japanese relations, both Wen Jiabao and Hu Jintao visited Japan. First, Wen Jiabao paid an official visit to Japan in April 2007. Upon his arrival at Haneda Airport, Wen gave a short statement written in a reconciliatory tone. According to the statement (FMPRC 2007) the 35th anniversary of the normalization of the Sino-Japanese relations offered “a historic opportunity to improve bilateral ties.” The visit was, in Wen’s words, “aimed at promoting political trust and expanding reciprocal cooperation and friendly exchanges so as to push forward Sino-Japanese relations to develop in a long-term, healthy and stable way” (ibid.).

Wen Jiabao continued with the same tone at the Japanese Diet on the following day. According to Wen (2007c) he was in Japan “to learn more about the new progress Japan has made and, more importantly, contribute my share to improving and growing China's relations with Japan.” As a continuation to the “ice-breaking” visit of Abe to China, Wen saw his trip to Japan as “an ice-melting journey.” Wen also reminded his audience of the extraordinary “length, scale and influence of China-Japan friendly exchanges” that were “our shared historical and cultural heritage which we should hold in great value, enrich and pass on from generation to generation” (ibid.).

Wen went over the near-compulsory part of the speech quickly, discussing the wartime era in terms of the “2000 years of friendly contacts” and “traumatic and unfortunate period of over 50 years.” While the war “launched by Japan” brought “untold sufferings on the Chinese people” it was “also a devastating and painful experience to the Japanese people” and “it was a handful of militarists who were

responsible for that war of aggression. The Japanese people were also victims of the war, and the Chinese people should live in friendship with them” (Wen 2007c). As a Chinese Premier talking to the Japanese legislators less than 7 months since the last visit of the Japanese Prime Minister to the Yasukuni Shrine, one could hardly expect further leniency than this.

Moreover, according to Wen further apologies were no longer necessary. Instead, Japan should behave according to the apologies it has already given:

Since the normalization of the Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, the Japanese Government and leaders have on many occasions stated their position on the historical issue, admitted that Japan had committed aggression and expressed deep remorse and apology to the victimized countries. The Chinese Government and people appreciate the position they have taken. We sincerely hope that the Japanese side will act as it has stated and honor its commitment.

[中日邦交正常化以来，日本政府和日本领导人多次在历史问题上表明态度，公开承认侵略并对受害国表示深刻反省和道歉。对此，中国政府和人 民给予积极评价。我们衷心希望，日方以实际行动体现有关表态和承诺] (Wen 2007c).

Against the background of Jiang Zemin’s 1998 visit to Japan, which resulted in Jiang lecturing his audiences from Emperor Akihito to the students of Waseda University about the atrocities of Japan during the war, the change in the attitude of China was clear.

In his speech, Wen even referred to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Island dispute. According to him, the “differences over some specific interests and some issues” between China and Japan were “of secondary importance compared with our common interests” (Wen 2007c).

In the issue of the East China Sea, our two countries should follow the principle of shelving differences and seeking joint development, and conduct active consultation so as to make substantive progress towards

peaceful settlement of the differences and make the East China Sea a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation

[对于东海问题，两国应本着搁置争议、共同开发的原则，积极推进磋商进程，在和平解决分歧上迈出实质步伐，使东海成为和平、友好、合作之海] (ibid.).

Clearly, shelving the dispute (a policy advocated by China already for several decades) was the best way forward, as it was better to concentrate on the positive aspects of the relationship.

In February 2008 State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan visited Japan to prepare for the expected visit of Hu Jintao. Between the visits of Wen and Tang, Shinzo Abe had resigned due to his loss at the LDP leadership elections and Yasuo Fukuda was serving as the Prime Minister of Japan. This did not have an impact on the bilateral relationship between China and Japan, as Fukuda, too, stayed away from the Yasukuni Shrine while in the office.

Another reason for Tang's visit was to give assurances to the Japanese leaders that China was taking the so-called dumpling incident seriously.⁹⁸ While the incident caused no deaths, it cast a dark shadow on the already disreputable mechanism of food safety controls in China. However, taking place in the midst of a nearly all-time high in the relations between China and Japan, Tang could afford to portray a positive image of peace and friendship between the two countries and make only brief reference to the food scandals in China during recent years.

But even now Tang (2008) could not go without mentioning the issues deriving from the wartime past. As the last of the "four points" given in his speech, Tang mentioned "some unresolved problems left from history" [一些有待解决的历史遗留问题] as well as possible "new problems that we must face together" [也会出现某些需要我们共同面对的新问题]. However, these problems should not disturb the bilateral relations between China and Japan, and they should be "handled

⁹⁸ "Dumpling incident" refers to a batch of contaminated Chinese food sold in Japan, resulting in illness for several people. Later, a Chinese man in China was arrested and sentenced for life for deliberately poisoning the dumplings exported to Japan.

properly and carefully” [慎重妥善处理]. After all, “in the new situation”⁹⁹ and in the “changing world” both China and Japan were “at an important period of development” [在重要的发展时期], and the main reason for Tang’s visit was to “develop Sino-Japanese friendly relations” in preparation for the visit of Hu Jintao later in the spring (ibid.). Given the fact that Chinese and Japanese economies were responding to the global financial crisis of 2007–2008 in very different ways,¹⁰⁰ this “important period of development” would in the Chinese view signify China closing any gap there still was left between the two countries in economic terms, itself a primary factor in the “rise of China.”

Finally, in April 2008, the President of China and the Chairman of the CCP Hu Jintao made an official visit to Japan. During his visit, Hu Jintao’s only public speech took place at Waseda University in Tokyo, and it was aimed to convince the audience of the new, bright prospects of the bilateral relationship. In his speech, Hu was actively downplaying the antagonistic feelings of the Chinese people towards Japan. According to Hu (2008a), China and Japan were “close neighbours, separated only by a small strip of water and with their bilateral relations at a new historical starting point facing new opportunities for further development” [中日是一衣带水的邻邦, 两国关系正站在新的历史起点上, 面临进一步发展的新机遇]. He brought with him the “friendly friendship” [友好情谊] of the Chinese people as well as the “sincere hope of the Chinese people for the development of Sino-Japanese relations” [中国人民对发展中日关系的真诚期待]. Both the government and the people of China

sincerely wish to work with the government and people of Japan to increase mutual trust, enhance friendship, deepen cooperation, plan for the future and take the all-round growth of the strategic relationship of mutual benefit between China and Japan to a new level

⁹⁹ “In a new situation” [在新形势下] is an expression used frequently in Chinese political and academic rhetoric. Referring to the frequent changes in the PRC society and politics, it can be used in almost any context.

¹⁰⁰ The Japanese economy would slip into recession later in 2008 while the Chinese still felt in early 2008 that the crisis was mostly a western problem (see Gottwald and Duggan 2011: 244).

[政府和人民真诚希望, 同日本政府和人民一道努力, 增进互信, 加强友谊, 深化合作, 规划未来, 开创中日战略互惠关系全面发展新局面] (ibid.).

Later, Hu wanted to talk from a “historical and realist perspective” [从历史和现实的视角] to give his audience a better understanding of China. Tracing Chinese history from 5000 years ago to the reforms of Deng Xiaoping, Hu explained how China had gone through a “historical change” [历史性变化] from hunger to a “moderately prosperous” [*xiaokang*, 小康] society. In the contemporary situation, China would be “committed to reform, focused on development” [锐意改革, 着力发展]. However, China was still a “developing country” carrying the burdens of “large population, weak foundation and uneven development” [人口多, 底子薄, 发展很不平衡] and there was still a lot of work to be done to “build a moderately prosperous society that benefit more than one billion people” [建成惠及十几亿人口的更高水平的小康社会] (ibid.).

To achieve this, China would follow the “path of peaceful development” [和平发展道路]. On the level of international relations, this would mean “independent foreign policy of peace” [和平外交政策] and, among other things “defensive national defence policy” [防御性的国防政策]. China was not going to “engage in arms race, does not constitute a military threat to any country, will never dominate, never engage in expansion” [不搞军备竞赛, 不对任何国家构成军事威胁, 永远不称霸, 永远不搞扩张] (ibid.). With rhetoric familiar from the other speeches by Hu as well as by other Chinese leaders, Hu was making a strong effort to convince his listeners that the rise of China would not be a threat.

The same tone continued when Hu commented on the bilateral relations of China and Japan. With only four sentences on the “unfortunate history” [不幸历史] of the wartime past, including a thinly veiled referral to the 2005 textbook controversy (“history is a most philosophical textbook [历史是最富哲理的教科书]), Hu (2008a) returned to the main point of his speech, the “new historical starting point facing new opportunities for further development.” According to Hu, the common interests for China and Japan were expanding, giving space for more

cooperation on both the global and the regional level. Both China and Japan were “important countries in Asia and the world” [亚洲和世界的重要国家] and they should create more mutual trust. They should treat each other’s development as a win-win partnership [双赢的伙伴], not a zero-sum rivalry [零和竞争]. They should also respect each other’s “major concerns and core interests” [重大关切和核心利益] (ibid.).¹⁰¹

Furthermore, Hu called for more economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, and support for the revitalization of Asia. Underlining the importance of the last, he called it “inseparable from the coordination and cooperation of China and Japan” [离不开中日两国的协调和合作] (ibid.), much the same way Tang Jiaxuan (2005) had commented the relationship between China and East Asia in general. For Hu Jintao, however, it was the task of China and Japan to “revitalize” Asia through their common development.

After praising the Japanese achievement in science and technology, as well as in developing their country through learning (with a reminder to his audience that it was to China where the Japanese had gone to learn in the past), Hu (2008a) called for the Chinese and the Japanese people to work “hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder” [手牵手, 肩并肩] for the Sino-Japanese cooperation and revitalization of Asia. What Hu seemed to evoke was a return to an era when China and Japan, together, had been working for the common good of not only East Asia, but the whole world. This vision, unfortunately, had no historic precedents to draw on, but it is clear that it was in accordance with China’s role development towards a great power, and that the role of China now was to act as at least an equal of Japan in East Asia.

In September 2008, in an essay published on the website of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, the then Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi outlined Chinese foreign policy since the policy of reform and opening in late 1970s. Yang, building his text

¹⁰¹ In 2011 Chinese Government’s White Paper “China’s Peaceful Development” defined China’s core interests as “state sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and national reunification, China’s political system established by the constitution and overall social stability, and the basic safeguards for ensuring sustainable economic and social development” (see CIIC 2011).

on the significantly improved international situation and influence of China, as well as its friendly relations with other nations [中国国际地位显著提高, 国际影响日益扩大, 与世界各国友好合作关系全面发展], praised Japan for continuing its aid to China amidst the sanctions put on China in the aftermath of 1989 violence against the Tian'anmen protesters (Yang 2008). He also mentioned the "friendly and cooperative partnership" that China built with Japan in 1998. Yang's speech took place after Hu Jintao's visit to Japan in 2008, so it is hardly a surprise that Yang saw the Sino-Japanese relations in an especially positive light, but the reference to the Japanese behaviour after 1989 underlined even more strikingly the positive view that Japan should to be seen in better light than the western countries.

However, the problematic territorial dispute of Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, avoided during this time by most of the Chinese leadership and seen to be of "secondary importance" by Wen Jiabao in 2007, was still there. Being an issue of territorial integrity and with strong links to the Taiwan issue, the dispute on the East China Sea was firmly within the "core interests" of China, but in the midst of the overall *rapprochement* between China and Japan some scholars were offering reconciliatory advice. For example, Cai Penghong (2008) of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences called for the joint development of the disputed waters in accordance with Deng Xiaoping's "My Sovereignty"¹⁰² policy. Seeing the territorial dispute in the larger context of Sino-Japanese relations, Cai took it to be more important to continue the momentum of good relations than attempt to gain control of the islands. However, according to Cai, the "My Sovereignty" policy was only an "interim measure" [一项临时性措施] before the final resolution of the dispute in China's favour (ibid: 44).

In contrast, in a 2009 article Guan Peifeng and Hu Dekun, both of Wuhan University, discussed China's border issues in general, and questioned the wisdom of the "My Sovereignty" policy in issues related to maritime territorial disputes.

¹⁰² "主权属我, 搁置争议, 共同开发" [(under) my sovereignty, shelve dispute and develop together] is a policy initiated by Deng, under which China would keep claiming the sovereignty of the disputed islands but would not escalate the issue, but instead would focus on the possible joint use of the potential natural resources in the area.

They suggested that China should clarify its key interests in question and use both domestic and international legislation to strengthen its sovereignty claim, while at the same time build more maritime power and further guide the domestic public opinion in the issue to gather more support to Chinese policies (Guan and Hu 2009: 49–50).

In general, the scholarly views of this era underlined the continuous positive development in Sino-Japanese relations, while making sure not to suggest forgetting the issue of Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Time just was not right for further moves, and for example both Cai Penghong as well as Guan Peifeng and Hu Dekun were in practise proposing for a continuous “shelving” of the dispute while waiting for a more permanent solution. Even when seeing China as an equal of Japan, the old, low-profile approach of *taoguan yanghui* was still the best way forward. Moreover, the domestic opinion and its impact on the foreign policy of China was recognised, as exemplified by Guan and Hu (2009).

After the resignation of Junichiro Koizumi in 2006 and all the way through the successive prime ministers until 2010 the relationship between China and Japan improved considerably. One major reason was the decision by successive Japanese premiers to stay away from Yasukuni, showing China their ‘proper’ handling of history. Neither were there controversial textbooks, nor did the dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu flare up in either of the countries. From the perspective of role theory, this time period included several factors pushing China in the direction of a more constructive role enactment towards Japan. Firstly, the “adjustments” of the successive Japanese premiers (not visiting the Yasukuni Shrine), eased the negative Chinese domestic opinion which both before and after this period had a strong impact. Secondly, after the 17th CCP Party Congress in 2007, the Hu-Wen leadership in China was at its strongest: having been cleared for the second term they could pursue their own policies more effectively than during their first term. Thirdly, the East Asian economic integration was taking wind under its wings, boosting China’s (economic) great power role development without creating too large contradictions between the ego and alter expectations towards the Chinese

national role conception. In short, there were fewer role conflicts present in the bilateral relationship between China and Japan during this era.

All this enabled China to act more freely in the role it saw itself in, as a developing economic power whose progress would benefit those around it as well. But as China kept developing, so did its national role conception. Soon it saw itself as an equal to Japan, and even as overtaking it in 2010. Unfortunately, in that year the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands flamed up again.

5.2.3. Escalation of the Dispute

The first months of 2010 mark a special point in the relationship between China and Japan. While China was still willing not to push on the problematic issues such as Diaoyu Islands, it was at the same time full of confidence due to its new role in world economics. According to Tang Jiaxuan (2010a), China's response to the financial crisis had made it "an important driver behind the recovery of the world economy." Moreover, and perhaps more importantly for the Chinese roles towards its neighbours, the (East) Asian integration seemed to be on positive track (ibid.). How the *identity* of a great power was transferred into the *role* of one was more complicated, however.

For example, both on the Chinese and the Japanese side the public opinion failed to follow the overall political *rapprochement*, as evidenced in the annual opinion polls by a Japanese NGO: while the governments on both sides kept praising the positive development of the bilateral relations, over 70% of the Japanese and 65% of the Chinese had either unfavourable or relatively unfavourable opinion of each other in 2009 (Genron 2015). This was reflected in the work of the Fifth China-Japan Friendship Committee convening in February 2010. In his keynote speech, Tang Jiaxuan reminded the participants of the remaining problems and challenges. According to Tang (2010a), "political mutual trust needs to be enhanced, our people's feelings for each other need to be improved, and some sensitive issues need to be properly handled." The committee responded by proposing more "people-to-people exchanges and nurturing favourable mutual sentiments through multiple channels" (Tang 2010b), such as the 2010 Shanghai

Expo. Trying to diffuse a vertical role contestation, the Chinese elites took it to be imperative that the issue were seen in their vein, instead of adapting policy to the seemingly assertive public opinion, which, according to Jin Canrong (2010: 7) of the Renmin University of China, had “alongside the significant increase in the comprehensive national power” [随着综合国力的显著提升] started to question the “road of the peaceful development” [质疑和平发展道路].

For China, peaceful development, however, did not necessarily mean the increase of Japanese power. In May 2010, when talking at the joint annual meeting of the Chinese Association for Japanese Studies and the National Association of Japanese Economic Studies, Tang Jiaxuan (2010d) reflected on the complexity of Japan in the eyes of the Chinese. In his view, Japan was at the same time “upholding the moral traditions of the East” as well as “advocating western values” (2010d), hardly a compliment coming from a senior member of the Chinese Communist Party. Moreover, Japan was an “economic giant” with a thirst to become a political great power (ibid.). The latest remark can be seen as a snub towards Japanese aspirations to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, an endeavour strongly opposed by China.¹⁰³ China, being an economic great power but still uncertain of the ramifications of the role of a great power, was in general at ease with economically strong Japan but wanted to see nothing beyond that.

At the same time there were Chinese scholarly voices, calling for more prudent foreign policy: Chen Xiao and Shi Yinhong (both of the Renmin University), while generally feeling positive about the recent developments, quoted Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda on how the rise of China had surprised Japan, making the Japanese uncomfortable. The two researchers also express their concern about China seeing the China-Japan relations as a “zero-sum game” [*linghe boyi*, 零和博弈], and encourage China to understand the Japanese needs as well on the road of “Sino-Japanese Friendship” [中日友好之路] (Chen and Shi 2010: 75). Another scholar calling for caution is Chen Yue, also of Renmin University.

¹⁰³ In fact, a permanent seat in the UN SC is often seen as a symbol of a political great power, but does not mean it automatically: the PRC has held the position since the early 1970s. This issue, related to the multiple identities of China, is discussed in e.g. Breslin (2013).

According to Chen (2010: 3), the rise of China had caused alarm in many countries, both among the traditional great powers and in China's immediate neighbourhood. Thus, "keeping a low profile" [韬光养晦] in traditional fashion would still be necessary, although it should be combined with "making difference" [有所作为].¹⁰⁴ This approach, according to Chen, was "dictated by the traditional Chinese culture and identity" [这是中国传统文化和国家特性所决定的] (ibid.).

Thus, and with a clear difference to the two other cases of this research, it seems that in 2010 the (new) great power role of China was suddenly contested by at least four different views: a) the alter expectations of Japan feeling insecure in facing the new, powerful China; b) the Chinese elites, aiming to fulfil the long-term goal of economically integrated East Asia; c) the Chinese public calling for more assertive foreign policy; and d) at least some academics seeing the traditional prudence and "keeping the low profile" approach to foreign politics still as the best way forward. While some of these views were in fact mutually inclusive, they led to a situation where the role enactment of China was hard to predict.

The emerging vertical role contestation between the Chinese elites and the people was abruptly solved (at least to some extent) by events beyond the control of either side. In September 2010 a Chinese fishing vessel collided with Japanese coast guard ship near Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the Japanese authorities detained the Chinese captain for over a week and only released him under heavy diplomatic pressure from China. There were also large public demonstrations in front of the Japanese embassy in Beijing, as well as other places considered to be affiliated to Japan in mainland China. The outcome of the incident was widely considered as a diplomatic victory for China, as Japan released the captain without charges (Tiezzi 2014a). But in any case, as the relationship between China and Japan had been developing mostly positively over the previous four years, the impact of the event was striking.

¹⁰⁴ 有所作为 (*yousuo zuowei*) is another Chinese idiom, referring to an ability to do things and achieve great results. One could argue that a role of a great power requires a state to possess this ability.

Only few months before, in the February meeting of the China-Japan Friendship Committee, Tang Jiaxuan had mentioned how the regular visits between the two countries had pushed “the relationship to new heights” and put it “on a new historical footing” (Tang 2010a). For some time, the problems between China and Japan had been pushed aside, since it had been more important to “focus on the big picture”. Taking “a prudent and calm approach” and handling the problems “properly” is easy to interpret as continuation of the shelving policy of Deng Xiaoping, especially since at this point Tang was willing to refer to these problems as “minor differences” (ibid; Tang 2010b). However, the strong reaction of the Chinese government, following the call of the Chinese public to the incident with the fishing boat, effectively ruled out the ‘prudence’ and ‘low profile’ approach: China was to assume an active and assertive role towards Japan.

But even as the dispute was heating up again, China was signalling to Japan that its strong reaction was mainly due to the domestic pressure. In 2011 Tang Jiaxuan admitted that the lack of friendly sentiments between the peoples of Northeast Asia caused disturbances and harmed the relationship between the countries in the region (Tang 2011b). Only four days later he repeated this view, calling for both sides to reverse the situation (Tang 2011c). For the first time the national sentiments is considered a *cause* of problems in Sino-Japanese relations, not a *result* of them.

Unfortunately, the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands was aggravated yet again by an actor not directly under the control of either of the national governments involved. In spring 2012 it became known that Shintaro Ishihara, Governor of Tokyo and a right-wing politician, was planning to purchase some of the islands that according to the Japanese view, were owned by private Japanese individuals. As a response to the purchasing plans of the Ishihara, the Japanese government decided to nationalise the islands by buying them up instead. According to the Japanese government, the aim was to prevent the use of the islands in a way that would escalate the tensions already existing between China and Japan. The result, however, was completely opposite. In August 2012 Tang Jiaxuan warned about the negative consequences among the Chinese people that “a single

careless move could trigger” (Tang 2012b). In the same speech he clarifies that this meant the planned nationalization of Diaoyu Islands by the Japanese government. In fact, this speech by Tang includes repeated warnings related to the deteriorating public sentiments between the Chinese and the Japanese. To underline the Chinese view, even Hu Jintao issued a statement amidst the APEC summit in Vladivostok, warning Japan of the possible ramifications of the nationalisation. According to Hu, due to the issue of Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the relations between China and Japan had reached “a grim situation” [*yanjun jumian*, 严峻局面]. Moreover, any attempts by Japan to

“buy the islands” are invalid and illegal and resolutely opposed by China. The Chinese government stands firm on the issues of territorial sovereignty. The Japanese side must understand the seriousness of the situation in full, avoid making a wrong decision and work together with China to safeguard the overall development of Sino-Japanese relations

[日方采取任何方式“购岛”都是非法的, 无效的, 中方坚决反对。中国政府在维护领土主权问题上立场坚定不移。日方必须充分认识事态的严重性, 不要作出错误的决定, 同中方一道, 维护中日关系发展大局] (FMPRC 2012a).

However, even this unprecedented level of warnings (before this, Hu Jintao had not commented the issue of Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in public) had no effect. Only couple of days later, on September 11, Japan nationalised the disputed islands, drawing strong condemnation from both China and Taiwan. Especially in China the purchase of the islands was seen as illegal, as were any “backroom deals between Japan and the United States,” a reference to the San Francisco Peace Treaty as well as to the 1971 return of the islands to Japan (FMPRC 2012b).¹⁰⁵ The further reactions of China, such as the increased activity of Chinese vessels in the disputed

¹⁰⁵ Premier Wen Jiabao added (in 21 September) that for the nation there were no issues of more importance in terms of dignity and independence than Diaoyu Islands, and that China would be “iron-willed” [*zhenghengtiegu*, 铮铮铁骨] in the issue (FMPRC 2012c).

area and the 2013 declaration of the Air Defence Identification Zone are described in the first part of this chapter.

The nationalisation of the disputed islands was the last diplomatic loss of Hu Jintao and his administration. Only two months later, in November 2012, the 18th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party had chosen Xi Jinping as the new chairman of the CCP. As the new leader, Xi has shown much more assertive views on both domestic and foreign politics, in a manner that can perhaps be best described as befitting a person ruling a great power. This kind of behaviour was never easy for Hu Jintao, probably for both personal and structural reasons: Hu was never considered a strong leader, but he also started (in 2002) as a leader of a developing country, and was through most of his tenure practising a foreign policy of a country in transition, with matching foreign policy roles.

However, in addition to the vertical contestation of China's role towards Japan around 2010 that was described in this chapter, there are some signs suggesting a possible horizontal role contestation as well. According to Jin Canrong (2010: 7), simultaneously with the China's increasing international power, the decision-making processes of Chinese foreign policy had become more complicated and were suffering from "weakened internal unity" [外交的内在统一性有所弱化], resulting in "contradictory signals" [相互矛盾的信] being sent to the outside. Even more interestingly, as reasons for this Jin (ibid.) offers the weakened political authority leading to weakened political leadership of the diplomacy [领导人权威下降导致外交的政治领导力有所减弱], combined with the decline in the relative power of the Foreign Ministry, in comparison to other ministries, interest groups, and public opinion.

In addition, some analysts, including Ding Shuh-fang of National Chengchi University in Taiwan, have suggested that the reaction to the East China Sea dispute may have been the result of a power struggle over the successorship of Hu Jintao by Xi Jinping, Bo Xilai and Zhou Yongkang under the CCP 18th Party Congress in 2012 (Ding 2015). While it is difficult, due to the opaqueness of Chinese decision-making, to verify this view, together with the widespread opinion of Hu Jintao as a weak leader and with the facts we know about post-18th Party Congress purges in

China (resulting in life sentences to both Bo Xilai and Zhou Yongkang), does point towards the possibility of a horizontal role contestation that would have played a part in the escalation of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute in the last years of the Hu-Wen leadership.

5.3. Conclusions: Altercasting Japan

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the relationship with Japan is probably the most complicated bilateral relationship China has: the historical understanding of this relationship includes plenty of “twists and turns” [经风雨曲] as stated by Tang Jiaxuan (2011a). The situation has not become any clearer during the Cold War era, with its strongly conflicting role enactments (China as a revolutionary power, Japan a staunch ally of the United States), nor during the post-Cold War rise of China especially in the 2000s: the earlier common view of the relationship, called “hot economics, cold politics” [*zhenglengjingre*, 政冷经热] has been replaced with more intense rivalry (Dreyer 2014).

As discussed in this chapter, these tensions are visible in the conflicted views on the national role conception of China, resulting in contested roles towards Japan especially in issues related to the “core interests” of state sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, even during the ten-year period described in this dissertation, with its significant ups and downs in the bilateral relationship between China and Japan, one common feature becomes visible: the Chinese attempts to *altercast* Japan into a role that would suit the role(s) of China better. As described in chapter 2, altercasting refers to processes where a state uses its own roles to impose on some other actor, usually an individual country, a role that suits the needs of the altercasting country. According to Harnisch (2011: 12–13), this is usually done by a stronger party in a relationship, and it is a process that may also fail, forcing the original actor to find other ways of role change.

In the early years of the Hu Jintao administration China was still attached to its old role as a developing country and considered itself incapable of forcing Japan (led by Junichiro Koizumi) to behave according to its own development agenda. Moreover, the behaviour of Koizumi, especially his repeated visits to the Yasukuni

Shrine, were seen as a sign of alter expectation in direct conflict with the identity, cultural heritage, and ego expectations of the domestic Chinese audience, dismissing the wartime experiences of China and thus undermining the legitimacy of the ruling communist party. As a move meant to force Japan into a more suitable role, China used diplomatic pressure (mainly avoiding high-level official meetings) while repeatedly referring to the wartime crimes of Japan and to the unwillingness of the country to face this past. From the perspective of role change, China was altercasting Japan into a role of an unrepentant aggressor, thus elevating the moral basis of the Chinese role.

After the resignation of Koizumi and during the subsequent warming of the bilateral relations, altercasting gave way to a more mutually constitutive process of role adaptation: China was willing to shelve the “problematic issues” between the two countries in order to facilitate the development of not only bilateral Sino-Japanese relations but also the ‘lofty’ common goal of a wider economic integration in East Asia. Again, China was emphasising the moral upper hand it was enacting in its roles towards Japan. However, the possibility of returning to the previous practise of altercasting was never given up.

Thus, when the relations between the two countries started to deteriorate again in 2010, China was quick to return to the process of altercasting Japan into a role that would suit the needs of China. This time there were, however, also signs of vertical (and perhaps even horizontal) role contestation taking place, possibly even influencing the outcome in the form of aggravated domestic opinion: the Chinese public has been showing signs of letting go of the old identity of a developing country and embracing the idea of China as a great power, demanding an even stronger reaction from their leaders. Thus, one can argue that the national role conception of a great power was behind the role enacted towards Japan in the latest escalation of the islands dispute.

As additional evidence of the need to altercast Japan, we can note that in the speeches and other materials discussed above the Chinese leaders have been notably silent about the impact of the United States. The fact that the dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands is a direct continuation of the U.S. control over the islands

is mentioned only by the academics discussing the issue. The same applies to the fact that Japan is part of the U.S. security alliance in East Asia, making it near impossible for China to take over the islands by force. But by bringing the United States into the issue China would also diminish the responsibility of Japan, an action that could undermine the altercasting process. Thus, it is better to accuse Japan and make no reference to 'outside forces' as China had been doing in the cases of both Central Asia and Southeast Asia. The responsibility here is Japan's, and Japan's alone. And, as discussed above, in order to leave Japan a space to move should it want to shake off the role it has been altercasted to, China has repeatedly made it clear that it is the (Liberal-Democratic) leaders of Japan that are to blame, not the whole nation.

In a way, China has been making a virtue of a necessity. In the absence of ways to force Japan to deal with the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in a manner satisfactory to Beijing, China's options for action have remained limited. A similar shortcoming functions in the background of the attempts of altercasting Japan as a country unrepentant of its wartime past: while China has undoubtedly gained a lot of national power during the 2000s, it has not exceeded Japan enough to be able to force Japan into the role it saw suitable for its own needs, even when there are other countries (such as South Korea) that have expressed similar views on Japan. At the same time, and together with the rise of China, the fears related to that rise have grown in Japan, creating more antagonistic alter expectations towards China's role. Combining the terms of the realistic tradition of international relations and of role theory, this could be described as a 'role dilemma.' This dilemma is shared also by the other neighbouring relations of China, but to a lesser degree, as has been discussed elsewhere in this study.

The contemporary understanding of role theory claims that roles are interactive, and it emphasises the need to investigate them both separately and in context with each other (see chapter 2.4.4 in this study). The dynamics of the relationship between China and Japan, and the roles adapted by them affirm this position. The bilateral relationship between the countries has caused problems for China's role development: the Japanese resistance to China's new role as a great

power reflects the country's unwillingness to acknowledge the wider power shift in East Asia. For the Chinese, this power shift is merely a return to the normal situation, as expressed by Zhou Enlai (and repeated by Tang Jiaxuan and Wen Jiabao) in his statement of the friendly 2000 years between the two countries. And as the national roles are results of both ego and alter expectations, China cannot be a great power towards Japan unless Japan acknowledges this. So far, China has had little success in bringing Japan round to this view, and has seen it best to "agree to disagree"¹⁰⁶ as suggested several times by the Chinese leaders in relation to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute (Wen 2007c, Tang 2011a, 2011b, 2012a). In essence, the islands dispute has become almost analogous to the overall development of the foreign policy roles between China and Japan.

¹⁰⁶ 求同存异, a *chengyu*, literally "seeking common ground while holding back the differences".

6. CONCLUSION

Today, China's national role conceptions towards its neighbours are clearly those of a great power. Both the ideational and the material components of these conceptions have developed so that they support this notion. Chinese leaders, executing foreign policy through their speech acts, portray an image of a country working for the "community of common destiny" [*mingyun gongtongti*, 命运共同体] (CCP 2015; Wang 2016), underlining a clear identity shift that is not opposed by the domestic opinion nor by China's cultural heritage. Moreover, the economic and military power of China, the material components of the Chinese NRCs, have reached new heights as well. While the exact time when China's outward direct investments overtook the incoming foreign direct investments is unclear, by 2015–2016 the change had undeniably happened (KPMG 2016). And while China's military budget has stayed close to 2% of the GDP, the solid growth of the GDP, albeit slower than in the past years, means that in absolute figures the Chinese military budget grows massively every year. Furthermore, the military parade of September 2015, organised to commemorate the end of the Second World War (or Anti-Japanese War) in 1945, turned into an unprecedented show of military power.

However, the situation has not been like this for very long. During the 2000s, China's national role conceptions were torn between the identity of a victim, aspirations of a rising power, complicated sets of domestic opinions, and outright mixed alter expectations. As a result, China's change towards the role of a great power was a slow process, influenced, among other things, by China's territorial disputes in its near-abroad. In this concluding chapter of my study, I will take another look at the each of my three cases, describe the overall process of China's role change in the 2000s, and see what follows from this concept of Chinese great power role to role theory itself, and to role theory's applicability to the study of Chinese foreign policy.

6.1. China's Peripheral Diplomacy, Territorial Disputes, and Role Change

It can be argued that a country cannot enact a role of a great power without enacting it in its own neighbourhood. Even 19th-century Great Britain, relying heavily on its overseas dominions, was seen foremost as a European power. China has until recently been only a regional power, and it is in its near-abroad that China needed to learn and enact its great power role first. This is also dictated by the historical understanding of China as a great power, which at the same time both accelerates and hinders China's role change: while history makes it easier for the Chinese themselves to understand their country as a great power, it also makes many of its neighbours wary of such a role change in their big neighbour. Thus, the new great power role of China is still strongly connected to China's earlier roles and the policies associated with those roles, such as peripheral diplomacy and the new security concept. Moreover, it is hardly a surprise that China's role change has been most successful with countries and regions that were perceived as successes for peripheral diplomacy, too.

China's experiences in Central Asia are a successful example of *role learning*, a process in which changed beliefs in one's capabilities lead the actor to make for itself a new role (Harnisch 2011: 10–11). While China's rise has caused concerns about the growing Chinese influence in Central Asia, these concerns have been locally offset by the economic benefits of China's generous financial aid and by China's support for the authoritarian regimes in the region. Moreover, the fact that China does offer a counterweight to the post-Soviet Russian presence in the region helps in ushering the Central Asian alter expectations towards China's great power role in a direction better conforming with that role. The announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative [*yidaiyilu*, 一带一路] in 2013 underlines this development of China's great power role in the area: by reserving Central Asia such a significant position in his plan of "community of common destiny," Xi Jinping clearly sees China's great power role in the region as a very stable one.

From a theoretical point of view, China's role change towards its Central Asian neighbours follow the pattern of constructivist role learning, which refers to

a “process in which the beholder acquires new role (and identity) in a given or evolving social group” (Harnisch 2011: 12). China started with small, unofficial cooperation under the framework of the Shanghai 5 Forum, later to be developed into the more official Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The successful development of the cooperation led to a more tangible partnership in the form of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure and, in pace with China’s growing capabilities, extensive financial aid. Role conflicts – mismatches of role expectations (Nabers 2011: 78) – have been rare and fairly minor, as both the (nearly non-existent) Chinese ego expectations and the Central Asian alter expectations have been in conformity with China’s NRC of a great power. In fact, most of the conflicting role expectations towards China’s new role in Central Asia have been coming from the western countries concerned about China’s negative impact on the democratic developments in the region. However, this has served mainly to strengthen China’s role change, as China’s great power role places little weight on democratisation, and instead emphasises – in accordance with peripheral diplomacy and the new security concept – economic development and state sovereignty, issues of major importance to the authoritarian regimes of Central Asia, too.

Even the territorial disputes between China and its Central Asian neighbours of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan posed no major challenge to China’s great power role. In the spirit of “relational security,” as coined by Huang and Shih (2014), China incorporated the border issues with the overall development of its great power role. If interpreted as role conflicts, China’s border disputes in Central Asia offer an illuminative case of China’s solving such role conflicts in a manner coherent with its great power role. By engaging in lengthy negotiations amidst the overall development of China’s new role, and by offering concessions by retreating from its earlier territorial demands, China added yet another component to its great power role: a vision of a great power willing to compromise even with the smallest and weakest of countries, which e.g. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan unquestionably are. However, these compromises are tied to the acceptance of China’s great power role by the other parties involved. It is unlikely that China would have been as

compromising should its neighbours have portrayed overtly hostile alter expectations towards China's great power role. Thus, I argue that the development of China's great power role in Central Asia created the model China has been attempting to realise elsewhere, too. However, in the other areas of its near-abroad China has not been able to replicate its Central Asian success due to factors both in and outside of China.

Similarly to Central Asia, China's roles in Southeast Asia also derive from peripheral diplomacy and the new security concept. It is here that China scored some of its greatest successes of peripheral diplomacy, for example in the wake of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, as well as in the cooperation frameworks of the ASEAN+3 and the ASEAN-China. While the history of the Central Asian states as parts of the Soviet Union allowed them to start anew with China in the early 1990s, China's problematic relations with Southeast Asia during the Cold War gave the positive developments between China and that region at the turn of the millennium additional value, especially in the post-Tian'anmen and post-Cold War international climate which gave China much less room to manoeuvre.

Nevertheless, China has been much less successful in enacting towards Southeast Asia a role of a great power similar to the one it occupies in Central Asia. Right after the 16th Party Congress of the CCP in 2002, China attempted to develop its great power role much the same way it was doing in Central Asia. By combining aspects of peripheral diplomacy and the new security concept, China deepened its cooperation with ASEAN and at the same time seemed willing to accept multilateral negotiations as a solution to the South China Sea disputes. However, apart from the economic benefits, China's new role had very little to offer the Southeast Asian countries, who also felt that the security implications of China's rise were not in their interests in the way many Central Asian states had found them to be.

Southeast Asia's much more diverse political situation, including close alliances with the United States, in many cases more developed economic structures, and memories of past Chinese influence in the region – as well as the contemporary impact of the local ethnic Chinese – have all been parts of the negative alter

expectations of China's great power role. But this diversity, or lack of unity, of Southeast Asia has also enabled China to undermine the position of the ASEAN in the issue of the South China Sea maritime territorial disputes, a development which became obvious in the ASEAN summits of 2012, in which the host country Cambodia blocked – presumably following Chinese advice – communiqués discussing the South China Sea disputes.

China's territorial disputes on the South China Sea have posed a double threat to China's great power role. Firstly, it has made the other countries involved in the disputes hostile to China's role change by creating negative alter expectations towards it. As discussed above, China's great power role is very vulnerable to these kinds of alter expectations. Moreover, China's great power role has suffered from the inability of the country to solve the disputes to the satisfaction of all parties. The ability to do this, I argue, is a major component in China's great power role in Central Asia, but in Southeast Asia, China's role met with limitations it did not experience in Central Asia. This has led to a different strategy of role change, called role adaptation.

As discussed in chapter 2.4, role adaptation refers to changes of “strategies and instruments in performing a role” (Harnisch 2011: 10). When one compares China's role enactment towards Central and Southeast Asia, it is easy to find this kind of role adaptation in the case of the latter. In fact, China seemed to follow precisely the path of role development based on Hermann's three levels of foreign policy change (Hermann 1990, quoted in Harnisch 2011: 10). First, China increased the use of a foreign policy instrument, in this case multilateral diplomacy through the ASEAN, resulting in the signing of the important treaties in 2002 and 2003. In the second phase China changed the way these instruments were used by supporting other mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit, as venues where the South China Sea questions should be discussed. And in the third phase China changed its view of the issue completely, demanding that the countries involved settle their disputes bilaterally, sidelining multilateral diplomacy altogether. This role adaptation has resulted in some successes, as the China-

ASEAN Free Trade Area was established in 2010 after negotiations that had lasted throughout China's process of role adaptation.

Japan differs from the other two cases of this study in many ways. As an old sovereign country, a highly developed economy and a close U.S. ally, it is naturally more capable of resisting Chinese attempts of role manipulation, and is less dependent on the potential economic benefits related to China's rise. Moreover, the 20th-century contacts between China and Japan, and especially the bitter memories of the 2nd Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) have a strong effect on the Chinese national role conception through the Chinese identity as a victim and the resulting hostile domestic opinion concerning Japan. In fact, no other neighbour of China has an equal influence on the Chinese national role conception, partly because the anti-Japanese sentiment has been a part of the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party.

While there are other aspects of China's roles towards Japan than the dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, such as the way wartime history is discussed in Japanese textbooks and the issue over who can visit the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, I focused on the islands dispute in my study of China's role change towards Japan. The choice was made partly for consistency, but also because the dispute heated considerably during the later years of my time frame of 2002–2012. In this particular case the impact of Japanese domestic politics in the alter expectations of the country towards China plays a central role, as evidenced by the nationalisation of the disputed islands in 2012 (see Maslow 2015).

Already before 2002, China was altercasting – consciously manipulating its “own role taking behaviour to (re)shape the role of another actor” (Harnisch 2011: 13) – Japan into the role of an unrepentant wartime aggressor.¹⁰⁷ As became evident in the comments of Zhou Enlai, describing the 2000 years of happiness followed by 50 years of adversity, the Chinese way of contrasting the weak China and powerful Japan with the ‘normal’ state of affairs goes back decades. This practise of depicting the sufferings of the Chinese people under the attack of imperialist Japan has

¹⁰⁷ Altercasting is by no means a rare event in China's foreign relations, as shown by Harnisch, Bersick and Gottwald (2016: 256–259).

continued in the 2000s whenever Japan has expressed any kind of negativity towards China's change into the role of a great power.

Japan itself did give ample opportunity for Chinese altercasting in the early 2000s. The practice of Prime Minister Koizumi to regularly visit the Yasukuni Shrine gave China plenty of ammunition in its attack on the "attitude Japan's political figures have on the history of Japan's invasion" (Tang 2003). Moreover, as China was by no means the only country invaded by Japan during the war, Koizumi's actions made it possible for China to portray itself a defender of other (East) Asian countries, a role closely related to China's earlier roles such as anti-imperialist agent and liberator/supporter in the 1960s, as well as good neighbour and opponent of hegemonism in the 1990s (see chapter 2.4.4).

During the few years of *rapprochement* between China and Japan after the resignation of Koizumi in 2006, the Chinese use of altercasting diminished noticeably. During his visit to Japan, Premier Wen Jiabao (2007c) even stated the appreciation of the Chinese government and people of the "remorse and apology" made by the Japanese Government. The reason for this was the perceived acceptance of China's role change in Japan, resulting in a new beginning in the bilateral relations. A rising China did not need to dwell on past wrongdoings as long as its rise was accepted in Japan, too. However, this common understanding of the new situation was a fragile one, and soon the Sino-Japanese relations experienced a blow that made China return to its old practice of altercasting, where the origins of the islands dispute – Japan's 19th and 20th-century imperialism, followed by the Cold War – were quickly brought back into the rhetoric of the Chinese leaders.

The escalation of Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute from 2010 onwards revealed the thinness of the friendly sentiments between the two countries. This becomes even more evident when we look into the components of the national role conception of China towards Japan. It is clear that the Chinese domestic opinion had experienced no major shifts during the 4-year period of positive developments in official Sino-Japanese relations. This was also acknowledged by the Chinese leaders in their statements in 2011–2012, where they emphasised the negative 'national sentiments' towards Japan. In fact, one can even argue that the domestic

opinion, as a component of China's NRC, prevented a scenario in which China would have attempted to adapt its role towards Japan by shelving the dispute, as was hinted at by e.g. Tang Jiaxuan. A shelving of the dispute would have meant a clear example of a role adaptation where China would have changed its view of the dispute in order to preserve its original role. This, however, did not happen and in fact China continued with a more assertive role enactment that was bound to antagonise Japan. But since China renewed its altercasting of Japan into the older role of an unrepentant wartime aggressor, the negative alter expectations of Japan were not as harmful to China's great power role as they otherwise might have been.

China's great power role has, therefore, also created problems for Chinese foreign policy. Especially the territorial disputes that China has been unable to solve – unlike those in Central Asia – have resulted in both intra and inter role conflicts (see Harnisch, Frank and Maull 2011: 256). The former take place in situations such as China's role change towards Japan, in which the originally preferred role enactment of China was at odds with the national role conception and especially with the domestic opinion of the NRC. The latter, describing incompatible role expectations between states are common and, in the framework of this study, have taken place in the cases of China's roles towards both Southeast Asia and Japan. In fact, especially the case of Southeast Asia follows a pattern of constructivist role uncertainty (ibid: 257), where both China and the other countries involved in the process of China's role change have become unsettled in their respective roles, resulting in uncertainty in actual foreign policy behaviour. According to this thinking, China's assertiveness after 2009 has been a result of its new role understanding as a great power. Thus, China's actions further validate the idea of international roles being highly contextual, as discussed in chapter 2.4.

6.2. China's Great Power Role

What is, then, this great power role China learned and adapted, and tried to impose through altercasting towards its neighbours in the later years of Hu Jintao's rule? According to Maull (2007, in Nabers 2011: 78–79) roles are based on “socially constructed values and ideas ... and do not take predefined norms for granted.” This

applies to China's great power role very well: China has been constructing its overall great power role from its own starting points, and has not been willing to take it as given by others. However, it is important to emphasise that in this study, "China's great power role" refers to certain social position of China, constituted of national role conceptions as well as ego and alter expectations towards that particular role, as explained in chapter 2.4.2. This distinction from e.g., a realist notion of a great power with its capabilities to influence, is an important one.

Firstly, China's great power role carries a heavy historical legacy: the past is present in China's roles in many ways, such as the idea of the peaceful nature of the Chinese civilization, the greatness of China's past before the decline of the Qing Dynasty in the mid-19th century, and of course, the weakness of China during the 'Century of Humiliation' that lasted until the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Thus, together with the need to prevent the repetition of the disasters of the past, the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" [中华民族伟大复兴] has become a major part of China's great power role in the era of Xi Jinping (2013–), but it was prominently present already in Hu Jintao's speeches in 2005 and 2008 (Hu 2005b; 2008a).

"History serves as a mirror" [以史为鉴], to quote Hu Jintao (2005b), and it also plays a distinctive part in China's great power role. China wishes to be seen as a great power that is different from the earlier great powers. While in part this is attempted in order to ease the concerns related to China's rise, there is another, moral aspect to this emphasis. While in the past, the great powers carved their marks of superiority to the landscapes of other, usually weaker countries, China attempts to portray its role change as a process that benefits others, especially those that are still considered as developing countries, a group that China feels close to, due to its own recent economic development and the close political connections created already during the Cold War era.

Together with China's own experiences of economic development, this historical baggage and the wish to be seen as different from the previous great powers explains yet another component of China's great power role: the emphasis on economic development over issues that relate to (western) universal values.

Moreover, this ‘different’ nature of China’s great power role includes China’s critique of the U.S.-led unilateral world order that China sees as a remnant of the Cold War era (and thus also of the era of traditional great powers) and which it criticised during the times of peripheral diplomacy and the new security concept in the 1990s.

On the one hand, China’s emphasis on economic development is understandable: it is something that China still needs, while at the same time it is something in which China’s own track record is unparalleled in the history of the world. Economic growth is also something that many developing countries, especially those with authoritarian governments (like those in Central Asia) look for. Thus, spreading economic development to its surroundings is also a major alter expectation to China’s great power role, and something it cannot ignore without another role conflict. The same applies to the lack of liberal values and the emphasis on state sovereignty in China’s great power role: it is a choice necessitated by China’s own situation, being ruled by the CCP, but it is also an alter expectation of many of China’s “significant others” or “primary socialising agents” (Harnisch 2011: 11), such as the members of the SCO.

China’s great power role has also had to take into account China’s concept of equality between countries, or “democratisation of international relations” (see e.g. Hu 2003). It has been difficult for China to acknowledge itself as a great power, while at the same time calling all countries equal. To drop the concept of equality from China’s role of a great power would likely result in negative alter expectations towards that role from the developing countries, whose support China has often relied on both in its actual foreign policy and in its role-making, as discussed above. China has solved this potential role conflict with a simple political sleight of hand: for China, in its new role of a great power, equality means equality of political and cultural traditions, not equality in international influence. It is only natural that China, as a great power, should have more influence, but as a moral great power it should not use that influence against the traditions of those that are more vulnerable.

Another moral aspect of China’s great power role relates to the ramifications of China’s economic growth. The interconnectedness between China’s and its

neighbours' economic growth, stability and peace (see chapter 3.3 and e.g. Wen 2003a) is clear in China's role statements. This ultimate goal of peace explains why, in Chinese foreign policy rhetoric, the issues of economic integration in all three cases discussed in this study are also seen to have moral importance. Moreover, it also helps China to defend its development model against the western criticism that is based on liberal democratic values. This has not, however, helped China much with Southeast Asia or Japan, where China's role conflicts, as discussed above, have been more serious.

What makes these role conflicts especially problematic for China's great power role is the fact that the role of a moral great power effectively rules out China's assertive behaviour towards its neighbours. Should China's foreign policy behaviour (role enactment) include breaches of state sovereignty or any kind of hegemonic tendencies, China would immediately meet additional role conflicts. Hence it was necessary for China to adapt its great power role towards Southeast Asia so that is involved mainly issues related to economic integration in the area. Continuous inclusion of the South China Sea disputes in the cooperation between China and the ASEAN would have resulted in a massive role conflict that would have made China's great power role in the region unsustainable. Finally, the altercasting of Japan to a role which can be seen as morally inferior has helped China to keep up its great power role even when its policies have resulted in negative Japanese (alter) expectations towards this particular role.

There are good examples of the possibilities that China's smaller neighbours have to make use of the ramifications of the great power role of China. Central Asian republics, for example, have benefited by expressing alter expectations that have matched China's national role conception and subsequent great power role. Thus, they have been able to achieve compromises in border agreements, significant economic aid and support for their own regimes. The Chinese plans related to the Belt and Road Initiative, published in 2013, are also a sign of the close relationship between China and Central Asia.

Another, more recent example – and one that extends beyond the scope of this study – comes from Southeast Asia. In June 2016 Rodrigo Duterte assumed

office as the new president of the Philippines. In a sharp contrast to the earlier policy of the Philippines towards China, he has sought *rapprochement* with China with a style that has raised eyebrows in many countries. With statements and actions that seem to express alter expectations in line with China's own ego expectations, Duterte secured trade deals and aid worth of billions of US dollars and, perhaps even more significantly, an access for Filipino fishermen to the contested waters that China had been keeping closed off since 2012 (Hunt and Quaino 2016).¹⁰⁸ Closer relations between China and the Philippines would also weaken the U.S. position in Southeast Asia and, subsequently, help China's great power role against the United States' unilateralism.

As indicated in chapter 1.2.2 of this study, China has in the past been reluctant to take on the role of a great power. By the second decade of this millennium, however, it has become clear that China has no such unwillingness anymore. The reason for this, I argue, is that China has managed to adapt the role of a great power to include aspects that are crucial for China's role coherence. In the end, it seems natural that China has been able to adapt the role to its own purposes, as it has managed similar things in the past: after all, it has been the only country able to enact a role of a developing country while having a permanent position in the UN Security Council, as well as capability for nuclear attack.

6.3. Role Theory and China

I started this study by introducing several questions related to China's role change and the role of the country as a great power. Having answered those questions above, I will end this study with a discussion on the remaining issues that relate to the study

¹⁰⁸ This followed the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, siding with the Philippines, which can be interpreted as the Philippines moving to altercast China as an aggressor in the issue. China, for its part, cannot blame the Philippines of past wrongdoings, as it has been doing with Japan. The new deal has, however, opened a possibility for Deng Xiaoping's "My Sovereignty" approach, under which a joint development of natural resources would be possible, while China would continue to claim sovereignty over the contested region. Thus, the deal would still not be as good for the Philippines as what the Central Asian republics received earlier.

of Chinese foreign policy through role theory, and on the possible future of Chinese foreign policy, provided by such study.

Firstly, there is the issue of the applicability of role theory to the study of Chinese foreign policy. Based on both this and earlier studies I find role theory a very useful tool in this field. The main reason derives from the country itself: China's foreign policy roles have experienced numerous changes during the PRC. As described in chapter 2.4.4 as well as at the beginning of each of my case studies, China's historical roles have often shifted as a result of changes in national role conceptions as well as both alter and ego expectations towards China's roles. The impact of this history, included in many studies of Chinese foreign policy, can be included in role theory without it becoming overtly relativist, a problem sometimes met in studies focusing on one country only.

China is also a large country, sharing borders with numerous other countries. China's relations with its neighbours also vary considerably, making generalisations of Chinese foreign policy often difficult. With its emphasis on both structure and agency, on alter and ego expectations, as well as on the composition of national role conceptions, role theory is flexible enough to deal with this problem as well. As evidenced by this study, role theory offers a framework of analysis that makes the comparison between various cases of Chinese foreign policy action meaningful. Moreover, constructivist role theory manages to explain foreign policy behaviour that seems to include actions related to both realist and liberalist thinking of IR. For example, the cases in this study seem to affirm the notion that China's rise is possible without a hegemonic war, while at the same time the findings lead away from the idea of China being socialised into the existing world order without significant changes to that order.

What becomes clear in this study is the fact that comprehensive study of role change requires robust empiricism. While covering only three cases, it has been necessary to cover a decade of China's foreign policy. Role changes of this magnitude cannot be explained by an event or two. As has been argued, for example, in the case of Chinese security policy (Sørensen 2008), China's role development in the 2000s can be described as contingent role change. It did not happen overnight,

but took several years of learning, and it was dependent on different events both within and outside of China. Moreover, a country's foreign policy roles include inertia: both role-taking and role-making take place through communication and interaction, and require clear messages signalled time after time, as has been the case of China in this study. Miscommunication in foreign policy is frequent, so one or two messages by an individual national leader can well be considered as outliers.

Similarly, the underlying national role conceptions are slow to change. A case in a point can be seen in China's roles towards Japan. The positive developments in the bilateral relationship were not able to change the underlying national role conception in China, which included aspects such as identity of a wartime victim as well as strongly negative domestic opinion towards Japan. It would have required a much longer exposure to and coverage of positive developments to change the Chinese national role conception towards Japan, admittedly a special case in this matter. As described in chapter 2.4.4, it is possible for a country to act against its NRC, but in the long term the situation probably becomes untenable. However, as role theory aims to incorporate both structure and agency, the impact of foreign policy behaviour to a country's NRC cannot be ruled out completely, especially in countries where the media is under strong political control, as is the case in China.

This leads me to the final questions of this study, as well as a quick look into the future. While foreign policy analysis is often very country specific, one can hopefully extrapolate some general notions from the role theoretical study of Chinese foreign policy that can then be applied to the FPA of authoritarian regimes more generally. While role changes of the magnitude that have taken place with China's rise are unlikely to happen in the near future, for a researcher willing to use role theory in the analysis of non-democratic systems of governance there are a few issues that must be considered.

One obvious one rises from the lack of domestic opposition and free press. This makes the study of role contestation and intra-role conflicts more difficult, as access to research material is restricted, or the material does not even exist. The impact of democratic centralism, as discussed in chapter 1.3, leads to a situation

where open challenges to the selected role of the country are difficult to find. This can sometimes lead to what I like to call – emulating Cold War era Kremnology – *Zhongnanhaiology*,¹⁰⁹ in which a researcher tends to overemphasise those scraps of information that have been obtained in the absence of proper empiricism. However, as the case of Japan in this study shows, especially vertical role contestation can be studied even in an environment more restricted than what scholars in the West are used to. In a situation like this it is hardly possible to overestimate the necessity of the use of local language(s), as the English-language sources published in country under study are likely to be especially closely monitored.¹¹⁰

Another issue is again most closely related to the case of Japan in this study. Unlike as it might look at the outset, the impact of domestic, public opinion on the international roles of a country can be even more important in non-democratic countries than in democratic ones. The reasoning is simple and has been discussed by e.g. Susan Shirk in her *China: Fragile Superpower* (2008). Many leaders of authoritarian systems are deeply insecure about their power and feel the need to keep the population content. The ways for this are numerous, but the use of nationalism, an emphasis on economic development and ideology are common, and have all been used in China as well.

The economy leads me to the final topic of this study, related to the future of Chinese foreign policy. The time frame of my research, between the 16th and 18th CCP Party Congresses (2002 and 2012) was also a time of fast economic growth in China. And as has been discussed in this study, this economic growth was very closely linked to China's role-taking as a great power. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to claim that with no or even clearly slower economic growth, China's contemporary roles would look very different. What, then, can then be expected, if China's economic growth continues to slow down, as has been the case in the last few years?

¹⁰⁹ Zhongnanhai [中南海], a section of central Beijing, which houses not only the central governing organs of both the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese State, but also the residences of the top Chinese leaders.

¹¹⁰ On the other hand, if the researcher is interested in the ways a country wants to portray its role, publications specifically directed to the outside world are, of course, valuable.

One assumption can be derived from the discussion in this study related to the slowness of role change and the inertia society has against changes in national role conceptions. The slowing down of economic growth would have to be of massive proportions in order to change the ideological components of China's NRCs. Moreover, even with a small percentage of economic growth, China's economy keeps growing massively in absolute figures, which can then be presented as an example of China's continuous rise and a material component of its great power role.

However, examples are already visible of role conflicts that have risen from China's new roles and from mixed alter expectations towards those roles. As has been the case in China's food security and relations with many African countries (see Duggan and Naarajärvi 2015), China's economic growth has created new kinds of interests for the country, and sometimes following those interests can result in role conflicts and new ways of role-taking and role-making, for example in the frameworks of global governance. This process is likely to continue in the future as well, as are the new kinds of political and security interests associated with China's great power role. This role is by no means fixed, but keeps developing in the mutually constitutive process of China and international relations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abb, P. (2013) "China's Foreign Policy Think Tanks: Changing Roles and Structural Conditions," GIGA Working Papers (213), Hamburg: German Institute of Global and Area Studies. Available at: https://giga.hamburg/en/system/files/publications/wp213_abb.pdf (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Allison, G. and P. Zelikow (1999) *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, New York: Longman.
- Allison, G. (2015) "The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?" *The Atlantic*, 24 September 2015. Available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/united-states-china-war-thucydides-trap/406756/> (Accessed 29 December 2016).
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (1976) "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia," 24 February 1967. Available at: <http://asean.org/treaty-amity-cooperation-southeast-asia-indonesia-24-february-1976/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (2002) "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea," 4 November 2002. Available at: http://asean.org/?static_post=declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea-2 (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (2003) "Instrument of Extension to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia to China," 8 October 2003. Available at: <http://asean.org/instrument-of-extension-of-the-treaty-of-amity-and-cooperation-in-southeast-asia-to-china/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (2009) "China Strengthens Cooperation with ASEAN," 20 April 2009. Available at: <http://www.asean.org/uploads/archive/PR-China-15bn-fund.pdf> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (2010) "China and Vietnam Issues a Joint Communiqué," 24 June 2010. Available at: http://www.asean-china-center.org/english/2010-06/24/c_13366494.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Barrett, T. C. (2012) *The Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia: The Overseas Chinese in Indochina*, London/New York: I.B. Tauris.
- BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) (2009) "Russia Defends Sinking Cargo Ship," 22 February 2009. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7904484.stm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Beylerian, O. and C. Canivet (1997) "China: Role Conception after the Cold War," in Le Prestre, P. G. (ed.) *Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era: Foreign Policies in Transition*, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 187–224.
- Bitzinger, R. A. (2015) "China's Double-Digit Defense Growth: What It Means for a Peaceful Rise," *Foreign Affairs*, 19 March 2015. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-03-19/chinas-double-digit-defense-growth> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Blanchard, J.-M. (2008) "Harmonious World and China's Foreign Economic Policy: Features, Implications, and Challenges," *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 13 (2), 165–192.
- Bosco, J. (2016) "Are Freedom of Navigation Operations and Innocent Passage Really the Same?" *The Diplomat*, 27 February 2016. Available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2016/02/are-freedom-of-navigation-operations-and-innocent-passage-really-the-same/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- BR (Beijing Review) (2014) "About Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence," 10 July 2014. Available at: http://www.bjreview.com/Cover_Stories_Series_2014/2014-07/08/content_628364.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Breslin, S. (2010) "China's Emerging Global Role: Dissatisfied Responsible Great Power," *Politics*, 30 (S1), 52–62.
- Breslin, S. (2013) "China and the Global Order: Signalling Threat or Friendship?" *International Affairs*, 89 (3), 615–634.
- Breuning, M. (2011) "Role Theory Research in International Relations: State of the Art and Blind Spots," in Harnisch, S., C. Frank and H. W. Maull (2011) *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analysis*. London/New York: Routledge, 16–36.
- Brown, C. and K. Ainley (2009) *Understanding International Relations* (4th ed.), Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Burchill, S., A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit and J. True (2005) *Theories of International Relations* (3rd ed.), Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cai, P. (2005) “试析东亚海域争端及其解决思路” (Shixi Dongya Haiyu Zhengduan Jiqi Jueding Silu), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (6), 28–33.
- Cai, P. (2008) “中日东海争议现状与共同开发前景” (Zhongri Donghai Zhengyi Xianzhuang yu Gongtong Kaifa Qianjing), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (3), 43–49.
- CAJ (Chinese Academic Journals) (2016) CAJ Full-text Database. Available at: http://oversea.cnki.net/kns55/brief/result.aspx?dbPrefix=CJFD_
- Callahan, W., A. (2015) “Identity and security in China: the negative soft power of the China,” *Politics*, 35 (3–4), 216–229.
- Cantir, C. and J. Kaarbo (2016) “Unpacking Ego in Role Theory: Vertical and Horizontal Role Contestation and Foreign Policy,” in Cantir, C. and Kaarbo, J. (eds.) *Domestic Contestation, Foreign Policy, and International Relations*, New York/London: Routledge, 1–23.
- Carlson, A. (2011) “It Should Not Only Be about Nationalism: China’s Pluralistic National Identity and Its Implications for Chinese Foreign Relations,” *International Studies*, 48 (3&4), 223–236.
- Castle, S. (2009) “Europe Ends Its Attempt to Penalize Uzbekistan,” *New York Times*, 28 October 2009.
- CCP (Chinese Communist Party) (2007) “胡锦涛在中国共产党第十七次全国代表大会上的报告” (Hu Jintao zai Zhongguo Gongchandang di Shiqici Quanguo Daibiao Dahui shang de Baogao), 25 October 2007. Available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/67507/6429855.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- CCP (Chinese Communist Party) (2015) “习近平频提命运共同体 提交思考未来‘中国方略’” (Xi Jinping Pinti Mingyun Gongtongti Tijiao Sikao Weilai “Zhongguo Fanglüe”), 18 May 2015. Available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2015/0518/c164113-27017916.html> (Accessed 27 December 2016).

- CCTV (China Central Television) (2009) “上海合作组织就乌鲁木齐‘7·5’事件发表声明” (Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi jiu Wulumuqi “7.5” Shijian Fabiao Shengming), 11 July 2009. Available at: <http://news.cctv.com/china/20090711/105329.shtml> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Charney, M. W., B. S. A. Yeoh and T. C. Kiong (2003) *Chinese Migrants Abroad: Cultural, Educational, and Social Dimensions of the Chinese Diaspora*, Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Chen, X. and Y. Shi (2010) “后小泉时代自民党对华外交再审视” (Hou Xiaoquan Shidai Zimindang Duihua Waijiao Zai Shenshi), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (30th Anniversary Celebration Special Issue), 71–76.
- Chen, Y. (2010) “中国当前外交环境及应对” (Zhongguo Dangqian Waijiao Huanjing ji Yindui), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (11), 2–4.
- Cheng, J. Y. S. (1998) “China’s Foreign Policy in the Mid-1990s,” in Cheng, J. Y. S. (ed.) *China in the Post-Deng Era*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 217–243.
- China Daily (2004) “Wen: No RMB Change While Speculation Is Rife,” 29 November 2004. Available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-11/29/content_395547.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- China Daily (2006) “Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter,” 12 June 2006. Available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-06/12/content_6020341.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- China.org.cn (Authorized Government Portal of China) (2005a) “Full-text: Chinese President's Speech on War Victory Commemoration,” 3 September 2005. Available at: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- China.org.cn (Authorized Government Portal of China) (2005b) “China's Peaceful Development Road,” 12 December 2005. Available at: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/book/152684.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- China.org.cn (Authorized Government Portal of China) (2011) "China's Peaceful Development," 6 September 2011. Available at: http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7126562.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Chun, A. (1996) "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity," *Boundary*, 23 (2), 111–138.
- Chung, C-P. (2012) *Domestic Politics, International Bargaining and China's Territorial Disputes*, Oxon: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Cunningham-Cross, L. (2014) "In search of a Chinese School: Ghostly encounters with the parochial/global discipline of international relations," PhD Dissertation, University of Manchester. Available at: <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:235155&datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PDF> (Accessed 17 April 2017).
- Dao, S. and K. Zhai (2002) "中国对东盟政策研究报告" (Zhongguo dui Dongmen Zhengce Yanjiu Baokao), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (10), 1–10.
- Deepak, B. R. (2012) "From China's 'Peaceful Rise' to 'Peaceful Development': The Rhetoric and More," South Asia Analysis Group paper no. 5336, 25 December 2012. Available at: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/1102> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Deng, X. (1994) 邓小平文选 第二卷 (*Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan di Erjuan*), Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe.
- Dessein, B. (2015) "Historical Narrative, Remembrance, and the Ordering of the World: A Historical Assessment of China's International Roles," in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) *China's International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?* London/New York: Routledge, 22–38.
- Devetak, R. (2005) "Critical Theory," in Burchill, S., A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit and J. True, *Theories of International Relations*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 137–161.
- Ding, S-F. (2015) Personal Communication in Taipei, April 22, 2015.
- Dingwall, R. (2001) "Notes Toward an Intellectual History of Symbolic Interactionism," *Symbolic Interaction*, (2), 237–242.

- Dreyer, J.T. (2014) "China and Japan: 'Hot Economics, Cold Politics,'" *Orbis*, (3), 326–341.
- Duggan, N. and T. Naarajärvi (2015) "China in Global Food Security Governance," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24 (95), 943–960.
- Duggan, N. (2016) "China's changing role in its all-weather friendship with Africa," in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) *China's International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?* London/New York: Routledge, 211–229.
- Dunne, T. and B. C. Schmidt (2008) "Realism," in Baylis, J., S. Smith and P. Owens (eds.) *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (4th ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 90–108.
- Dutton, P. A. (2014) "An Analysis of China's Claim to Historic Rights in the South China Sea," in Song, Y.-H. and K. Zou (eds.) (2014) *Major Law and Policy Issues in the South China Sea: European and American Perspectives*, Farnham: Ashgate, 57–75.
- ECA (European Court of Auditors) (2013) "EU Development Assistance to Central Asia," Special Report 13. Available at: http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR13_13/QJAB13014ENN.pdf (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- The Economist (2004) "Peaceful rise," 24 June 2004. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/node/2792533> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- The Economist (2012) "The Dragon's New Teeth," 7 April 2012. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/node/21552193> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Emory, K. O. (1970) "Geological Structure and Some Water Characteristics of the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea," *Petroleum Geology of Taiwan*, (7), 243–279.
- Fairbank, J. K. (ed.) (1970) *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (2nd ed.), Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Fairbank, J. K. (1974) "Varieties of the Chinese Military Experience," in Kierman, F. A., J. K. Fairbank and E. L. Dreyer (eds.) *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1–27.

- Feng, H. (2007) *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Confucianism, Leadership and War*, London: Routledge.
- Feng, Y. (2005) “‘逐客令’的冲击” (“Zhukeling” de Chongji), *People’s Daily*, 5 August 2005.
- Fish, I. S. (2014) “Is China Still a ‘Developing’ Country? A Look at Beijing’s Favorite Rhetorical Trick,” *Foreign Policy*, 25 September 2014. Available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/25/is-china-still-a-developing-country/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Fletcher, J. (1970) “China and Central Asia, 1368–1884,” in Fairbank, J. K. (ed.) *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations* (2nd ed.), Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 206–225.
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China) (2002) “中国关于新安全观的立场文件” (Zhongguo Guanyu Xin Anquanguan de Lichang Wenjian), 31 July 2002. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/pds/ziliao/tytj/t4549.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China) (2005) “Foreign Ministry Spokesman Kong Quan’s Press Conference on 24 May 2005,” 25 May 2005. Available at <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t197179.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China) (2007) “Wen Jiabao Delivers Written Speech at Japan’s Haneda Airport,” 11 April 2007. Available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t310955.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China) (2009) “温家宝出席第十二次东盟与中日韩领导人会议” (Wen Jiabao Chuxi di Shi’erci Dongmeng yu ZhongRiHan Lingdaoren Huiyi), 24 October 2009. Available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjb_673085/zjzg_673183/yzs_673193/dqzz_673197/dmyzrh_673227/xgxw_673233/t622359.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China) (2012a) “胡锦涛就当前中日关系和钓鱼岛问题表明立场” (Hu Jintao jiu Dangqian Zhongri Guanxi he Diaoyudao Wenti Biaoming Lichang), 9 September 2012. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/zt_674979/dnzt_674981/qtzt/diaoyudao_675061/t967561.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China) (2012b) “Diaoyu Islands cannot be bought,” 14 September 2012. Available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/diaodao_665718/t970602.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China) (2012c) “温家宝首次在海外就钓鱼岛问题表态: 铮铮铁骨毫不退让” (Wen Jiabao Shouci zai Haiwai jiu Diaoyudao Wenti Biaotai: Zhengzheng Tiegou Haobu Tuirang), 21 September 2012. Available at: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/diaoyudao/chn/xwdt/t985263.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China) (2012d) “温家宝出席第七届东亚峰会” (Wen Jiabao Chuxi di Qijie Dongya Fenghui), 20 November 2012. Available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjb_673085/zzjg_673183/yzs_673193/dqzz_673197/dyfh_673241/xgxw_673247/t990962.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China) (2013a) 中华人民共和国边界事务条约集 2004–2012 年 (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Bianjie Shiwu Tiaoyueji: 2004–2012 Nian*), Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe.
- FMPRC (Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China) (2013b) “王毅: 中国的发展是世界和平力量的增强” (Wang Yi: Zhongguo de Fazhan Shi Shijie Heping Liliang de Zhengqiang), 20 August 2013. Available at: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjbzhd/t1067723.shtml> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Fravel, T. M. (2008) *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press.

- Genron (2015) "11th Japan-China Joint Opinion Poll Analysis Report on the Comparative Data," 24 October 2015. Available at: http://www.genron-npo.net/pdf/2015forum_en.pdf (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- George, A. L. and A. Bennett (2005) *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Glaser, B. S. (2012) "Armed Clash in the South China Sea," Council of Foreign Relations Press, April 2012. Available at: <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/armed-clash-south-china-sea/p27883> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Goldstein, J. and R. O. Keohane (1988) "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in Goldstein, J. and R. O. Keohane, *Ideas & Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 3–30.
- Gottwald, J.-C. and N. Duggan (2011) "Hesitant Adaptation: China's New Role in Global Policies," in Harnisch, S., C. Frank and H. W. Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analysis*. London/New York: Routledge, 234–251.
- Gottwald, J.-C. (2016) "China's Roles in International Institutions: The Case of Global Economic Governance," in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) (2016) *China's International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?* London/New York: Routledge, 127–144.
- Gov.cn (Chinese government internet portal) (2006) "Japan's Abe Visits China, 'Turning Point' in Relations," 9 October 2006. Available at: http://www.gov.cn/misc/2006-10/09/content_407481.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Gries, P. (2005a) "Social Psychology and the Identity-Conflict Debate: Is a 'China Threat' Inevitable?" *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (11), 235–265.
- Gries, P. (2005b) "China's 'New Thinking' on Japan," *China Quarterly* (184), 831–850.

- Griffith, E. (2012) "The Three Phases of China's Response to Koizumi and the Yasukuni Shrine Issue: Structuration in Sino-Japanese Relations," ERCCT Online Paper Series, August 2012. Available at: <http://www.ercct.uni-tuebingen.de/Files/ERCCT%20Online%20Paper%20Series/Young%20Scholar%20Workshop%202012/EOPS7%20-%20Ed%20Griffith,%20China%20Yasukuni%20Shrine.pdf> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Guan, P. and D. Hu (2009) "新中国边界政策: 从陆地到海洋" (Xin Zhongguo Bianjie Zhengce: Cong Ludi dao Haiyang), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (10), 45–50.
- Harding, H. (1990) "The Impact of Tiananmen on Chinese Foreign Policy," in Harding, H., A. S. Whiting and R. S. Ross, *China's Foreign Relations After Tiananmen: Challenges for the U.S.*, Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian and Soviet Research, 5–17. Available at: <http://www.nbr.org/publications/nbranalysis/pdf/vol1no3.pdf> (Accessed 28 December 2016).
- Harnisch, S. (2011) "Role Theory: Operationalization of Key Concepts," in Harnisch, S., C. Frank and H. W. Maull (eds.) *Role Theory in International Relation: Approaches and Analysis*, London/New York: Routledge, 7–15.
- Harnisch, S. (2012) "Conceptualizing in the Minefield: Role Theory and Foreign Policy Learning," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, (8), 47–69.
- Harnisch, S. (2016a) "Role Theory and the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy," in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) *China's International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?*, London/New York: Routledge, 3–21.
- Harnisch, S. (2016b) "China's Historical Self and Its International Role," in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) *China's International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?* London/New York: Routledge, 38–59.
- Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) (2016) *China's International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International order?* London/New York: Routledge.
- Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (2016b) "China's Role Evolution: Domestic Imperatives and Foreign Expectations," in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) *China's International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?* London/New York: Routledge, 250–263.

- Harnisch, S., C. Frank and H. W. Maull (2011) *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analysis*, London/New York: Routledge.
- Harnisch, S. and H. W. Maull (eds.) (2001) *Germany as a Civilian Power? The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hermann, C. F. (1990) "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, (1), 3–21.
- Hettne, B. and F. Söderbaum (2010) "Theorizing the Rise of Regionness," *New Political Economy*, (5), 457–472.
- Ho, W.-C. (2012) "The Rise of the Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie and Factional Politics of China," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 3 (42), 514–521.
- Hollis, M. and S. Smith (1992) *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Holsti, K. J. (1970) "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 14 (3), 233–309.
- Hong, Z. (2013) "Chinese Public Offers Broad Support to ADIZ," *South China Morning Post*, 29 November 2013. Available at: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1368206/public-offers-broad-support-adiz> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2003) "承前启后继往开来努力开创上海合作组织事业新局面" (Chengqian Qihou Jiwang Kailai Nuli Kaichuang Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi Shiye Xin Jujian), speech at the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Moscow, 29 May 2003. Available at: <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20030530/1003867.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2004) "加强务实合作 共谋和平发展" (Jiaqiang Wushi Hezuo, Gongmou Heping Fazhan), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Tashkent, 17 June 2004. Available at: <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/1024/2580322.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Hu, J. (2005a) “加强团结合作 促进稳定发展” (Jiaqiang Tuanjie Hezuo, Cujin Wending Fazhan), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Astana, 5 July 2005. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2005-07/06/content_3179996.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2005b) “胡锦涛在纪念中国人民抗日战争暨世界反法西斯战争胜利 60 周年大会上的讲话” (Hu Jintao Zai Jinian Zhongguo Renmin Kangri Zhanzhengji Shijie Fan Faxisi Zhanzheng Shengli 60 Zhounian Dahuishang de Jianghua), 3 September, 2005. Available at: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceno/chn/xnyfgk/t210525.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2005c) “树立开放思维-实现合作共赢” (Shuli Kaifang Siwei Shixian Hezuo Gongying), speech at the APEC CEO Summit in Pusan, 17 November 2005. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2005-11/19/content_3803420.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2006) “共创上海合作组织更加美好的明天” (Gongchuang Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi Gengjia Meihao de Mingtian), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Shanghai, 15 June 2006. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/4477426.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2007) “加强睦邻互信 推动和平发展” (Jiaqiang Mulin Huxin Tuidong Heping Fazhan), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Bishkek, 16 August 2007. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/6125086.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2008a) “在日本早稻田大学的演讲” (Zai Riben Zaodaotian Daxue de Yanjiang), speech at Waseda University, Tokyo, 8 May 2008. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-05/08/content_8131916.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2008b) “携手建设持久和平, 共同繁荣的和谐地区” (Xieshou Jianshe Chijiu Heping, Gongtong Fanrong de Hexie Diqu), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Dushanbe, 28 August 2008. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/7744755.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Hu, J. (2009) “携手应对国际金融危机 共同创造和谐美好未来” (Xieshou Yingdui Guoji Jinrong Weiji, Gongtong Chuangzao Hexie Meihao Weilai), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Yekaterinburg, 16 June 2009. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/158046/158049/9487621.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2010) “深化务实合作 维护和平稳定” (Shenhua Wushi Hezuo, Weihu Heping Wending), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Tashkent, 11 June 2010. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/11857995.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2011) “和平发展 世代友好” (Heping Fazhan Shidai Youhao), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Astana, 15 June 2011. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/14910992.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2012a) “维护持久和平 促进共同繁荣” (Weihu Chijiu Heping Cujin Gongtong Fanrong), speech at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Shanghai, 7 June 2012. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/18111860.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, J. (2012b) “胡锦涛在中国共产党第十八次全国代表大会上的报告” (Hu Jintao zai Zhongguo Gongchandang di Shibaci Quanguo Daibiao Dahuishang de Baogao), 8 November 2012. Section 11, available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2012/1118/c64094-19612151-11.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Hu, W. (2016) “Xi Jinping’s ‘Big Power Diplomacy’ and China’s Central National Security Commission (CNSC),” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 25 (98), 163–177.
- Huang, C-C. and C-Y. Shih (2014) *Harmonious Intervention: China’s Quest for Relational Security*, Farnham: Ashgate.
- Hudson, V. (2002) “Foreign-Policy Decision-Making: A Touchstone for International Relations Theory in the Twenty-First Century,” in Snyder, R. C., H. W. Bruck, and B. Sapin (2002) *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1–20.

- Hudson, V. (2005) "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, (1), 1–30.
- Hunt, K. and K. Quiano (2016) "China Allows Philippines Fishermen Access to Disputed Shoal in South China Sea," *CNN*, 31 October 2016. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/31/asia/philippines-china-scarborough-shoal-fishermen/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Huotari, M. (2016) "Finding a New Role in the East Asian Financial Order: China's Hesitant Turn Towards Leadership," in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) *China's International Roles*. London/New York: Routledge, 147–171.
- Hyer, E. (2014) *The Pragmatic Dragon: China's Grand Strategy and Boundary Settlements*, Vancouver: UBC Press.
- ICG (International Crisis Group) (2012) "Kyrgyzstan: Widening Ethnic Divisions in the South," ICG Asia Report (222), 29 March 2012. Available at: http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6976~v~Kyrgyzstan__Widening_Ethnic_Divisions_in_the_South.pdf (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Jakobson, L and D. Knox (2010) "New Foreign Policy Actors in China," SIPRI Policy Paper 26, Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
- Ji, P. (2013) *大国疆域 (Daguo Jiangyu)*, Beijing: Zhonggong Dangshi Chubanshe.
- Jin, C. (2010) "2010 年中国外交新态势" (2010 Nian Zhongguo Waijiao Xin Taishi), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (11), 6–8.
- Jin, C. (2015) Personal Communication in Beijing, 28 April 2015.
- Johnston, A. I. (1995) *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Johnston, A. I. (2008) *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Johnston, A. I. (2013) "How New and Assertive is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security*, 37 (4), 7–48.
- Jones, E. (2017) "'Sellout' Ministries and Jingoism: China's Bureaucratic Institutions and the Evolution of Contested National Role Conceptions in the South China Sea," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 13 (2), 1–19.

- Kallio, J. (2016) *Towards China's Strategic Narrative: On the construction of the historico-cultural roots of China's national identity in the light of the Chinese debate relating to the rise of traditional schools of thought*, Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis 339, Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press.
- Karrar, H. H. (2009) *The New Silk Road Diplomacy: China's Central Asian Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Keohane, R. O. (1984/2005) *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (2nd ed.), Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Keohane, R. O. (1988) "International Institutions: Two Approaches," *International Studies Quarterly*, (4), 379–396.
- Khoo, N. (2015) "China's East Asia Policy Since 2009," in Tan, A. T. H. (ed.) *Security and Conflict in East Asia*, Oxon/New York: Routledge, 51–60.
- Kim, T. (2015) "Leading Small Groups: Managing All Under Heaven," in Finkelstein, D.
- M. and M. Kivlehan (eds.) *China's Leadership in the Twenty-First Century: The Rise of the Fourth Generation*, Oxon: Routledge, 121–140.
- Kim, H. J. (2016) "Will IR Theory with Chinese Characteristics Be a Powerful Alternative?" *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 9, (1), 59–79.
- KPMG (2016) "China's ODI Surpassed FDI for the First Time in 2015," 29 September 2016. Available at: <https://home.kpmg.com/cn/en/home/insights/2016/09/china-odi-exceeded-fdi-2015-private-sector.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Kubáľková, V. (ed.) (2015) *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World*, New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Kurlantzick, J. (2007) *Charm offensive: how China's soft power is transforming the world*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kurlantzick, J. (2014) *Southeast Asia's Regression From Democracy and Its Implications*, The Council on Foreign Relations Working Paper, May 2014. Available at: <http://www.cfr.org/democratization/southeast-asias-regression-democracy-its-implications/p33023> (Accessed 28 December 2016).
- Lai, H. and S.-J. Kang (2014) "Domestic Bureaucratic Politics and Chinese Foreign Policy," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23 (86), 294–313.

- Lanteigne, M. (2007) *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*, Oxon: Routledge.
- Lanteigne, M. (2016) *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction* (3rd ed.), London: Routledge.
- Lary, D. (2008) "The Uses of the Past: History and Legitimacy," in Laliberté, A. and M. Lanteigne (eds.) *The Chinese Party-State in the 21st Century*. Oxon/New York: Routledge, 130–146.
- Layne, C., W. Wohlworth and S. G. Brooks (2012) "US Decline or Primary? A Debate," in Cox, M. and D. Stokes (eds.) *US Foreign Policy* (2nd ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 409–431.
- Legro, J. W. and A. Moravcsik (1999) "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" *International Security*, 24 (2), 5–55.
- Lieberthal, K. (1995) *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Li, A. (2014) "Chinese Demand Apology as Indonesian Communist-Purge Film Gets Oscar Nod," *South China Morning Post*, 21 January 2014. Available at: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china-insider/article/1410271/chinese-demand-apology-indonesian-communist-purge-film-gets-oscar?page=all> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Li, C. (2016) *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era: Reassessing Collective Leadership*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Linklater, A. (2005) "The English School," in Burchill, S., A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit and J. True, *Theories of International Relations* (3rd ed.), Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 84–110.
- Liu, J. (2012a) "温家宝: 中国经济将为东盟国家带来更多机遇" (Wen Jiabao: Zhongguo Jingji Jiangwei Dongmen Guojia Dailai Gengduo Jiyu), *People's Daily*, 19 November 2012. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2012/1119/c1024-19626663.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Liu, J. (2012b) “温家宝: 中方愿与东盟国家加强安全和战略对话与合作” (Wen Jiabao: Zhongfang Yuanyu Dongmeng Guijia Jiaqiang Anquan he Zhanlue Duihua yu Hezuo), *People's Daily*, 19 November 2012. Available at: <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2012/1119/c1024-19626664.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Lo, B. (2008) *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing and the New Geopolitics*, London/New York: Chatham House/Brookings Institution Press.
- Louie, A. (2000) “Re-Territorializing Transnationalism: Chinese Americans and the Chinese Motherland,” *American Ethnologist* 27 (3), 645–669.
- Lu, F. (2010) “An Analysis of U.S. Involvement in the South China Sea Dispute,” *Contemporary International Relations* (6), 133–140.
- Lu, Z. (2002) “把握变化, 重视未来” (Bawo Bianhua, Zhongshi Weilai), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (8), 1–6.
- Lu, Z. (2004) “推进中日关系的建言” (Tuijin Zhongri Guanxi de Jianyan), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (6), 1–11.
- Manicom, J. (2014) *Bridging Troubled Waters: China, Japan, and Maritime Order in the East China Sea*, Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Masilamani, L. and J. Peterson (2014) “The ‘ASEAN Way’: The Structural Underpinnings of Constructive Engagement,” *Foreign Policy Journal*, 15 October 2014. Available at: <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2014/10/15/the-asean-way-the-structural-underpinnings-of-constructive-engagement/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Maslow, S. (2016) “China and Japan: Partner, Rival and Enemy?” in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) (2016) *China's International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?* London/New York: Routledge, 192–210.
- Maull, H. W. (2007) “Deutschland als Zivilmacht,” in Schmidt, S., G. Hellman and R. Wolf (eds.) *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, Wiesbaden: VS.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2010) “The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, (3), 381–396.

- Miks, J. (2012) "China, Philippines in Standoff," *The Diplomat*, 11 April 2012. Available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2012/04/china-philippines-in-standoff/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Miller, A. L. (2008) "The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups," *China Leadership Monitor*, (28), Hoover Institution. Available at: <http://www.hoover.org/research/ccp-central-committees-leading-small-groups> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Misra, A. (2001) "Shanghai 5 and the Emerging Alliance in Central Asia: the Closed Society and its Enemies," *Central Asian Survey*, (3), 305–21.
- MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan) (2014) "Fourth Meeting of the New Japan-China Friendship Committee for the 21st Century to be Held," 1 December, 2014. Available at: http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000536.html (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan) (2016) "Trends in Chinese Government and Other Vessels in the Waters Surrounding the Senkaku Islands, and Japan's Response." Available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000170838.pdf> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Moore, T. G. and D. Yang (2001) "Empowered and Restrained: Chinese Foreign Policy in the Age of Economic Interdependence," in Lampton, D. (ed.) *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 191–229.
- Morgenthau, H. (1946) *Scientific Man versus Power Politics*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Nabers, D. (2011) "Identity and Role Change in International Relations," in Harnisch, S., C. Frank and H. W. Maull (eds.) *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analysis*, London/New York: Routledge, 74–92.
- Naarajärvi, T. (2007) Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Chinese research on international relations: differences in Chinese and western concepts of 'new regionalism', Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Helsinki.
- Naarajärvi, T. (2012a) "China, Russia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Blessing or Curse for New Regionalism in Central Asia?" *Asia Europe Journal*, (2), 113–126.

- Naarajärvi, T. (2012b) “War on Terror with Chinese Characteristics?” in Hyttiäinen, T., L. Jalava, J. Saarikivi and E. Sandman (eds.) *Per Urales ad Orientem: Iter polyphonicum multilingue*, Helsinki: Finno-Ugrian Society, 251–261.
- Naarajärvi, T. (2014) “Reluctant Great Power: Role Adaptation in Chinese Foreign Policy,” presentation at the China Research Day of Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 7 November 2014. Event page available at: http://www.fiia.fi/fi/event/703/china_research_day_2014_china_s_great_power_identity/ (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Noesselt, N. (2016) “China and Socialist Countries: Role Change and Role Continuity,” in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) (2016) *China’s International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?* London/New York: Routledge, 175–191.
- Onuf, N. (2015) “Speaking of Policy,” in Kulbakova, V. (ed.) *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World*, London/New York: Routledge, 77–95.
- OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) (2005) “Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, 13 May 2005,” 20 June 2005. Available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/15653?download=true> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Pan, G. (2008) “‘9·11’以来“东突”势力的新变化及其动因” (“9/11” Yilai “Dongtu” Shili de Xin Bianhua jiqi Dongyin), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (10), 47–54.
- Pan, G. (2008) “改革开放 30 年来的中国能源外交” (Gaige Kaifang 30 Nianlai de Zhongguo Nengyuan Waijiao), *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu*, (6), 29–34.
- Pan, G. (2014) Personal Communication in Shanghai, April 7, 2014.
- Pan, G. and G. Zhao (2009) “析‘世维会’的国际化图谋” (Fen “Shiwei hui” de Guojihua Tumou), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (9), 21–28.
- Panda, A. (2013) “Indian PM Signs Border Defense Agreement with China,” *The Diplomat*, 24 October 2013. Available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2013/10/indian-pm-signs-border-defense-agreement-with-china/> (Accessed 28 December 2016).
- Perdue, P. C. (2010) *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

- Perdue, P. C. (2015) "The Tenacious Tributary System," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24 (96), 1002–1014.
- Pomfret, J. (2010) "U.S. Takes a Tougher Tone with China," *Washington Post*, 30 July 2010. Available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/29/AR2010072906416.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- PRC (People's Republic of China) (1999) *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.
- Qi, P. (2013) 大国疆域: 当代中国陆地边界问题述论 (*Daguo Jiangyu: Dangdai Zhongguo Ludi Bianjie Wenti Shulun*), Beijing: Zhonggongdangshi Chubanshe.
- Reilly, J. (2010) "China's Online Nationalism toward Japan," in Shen, S. and S. Breslin (eds.) *Online Chinese Nationalism and China's Bilateral Relations*, Plymouth: Lexington Books, 45–73.
- Reus-Smit, C. (2005) "Constructivism," in Burchill, S., A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit and J. True, *Theories of International Relations* (3rd ed.), Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 188–213.
- Rozman, G. (2013) "Chinese National Identity and Foreign Policy: Linkages between the Two," in Rozman, G. (ed.) *China's Foreign Policy: Who Makes It, and How Is It Made?* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 153–185.
- Rudelson, J. (1997) *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism along China's Silk Road*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Saich, T. (2015) *Governance and Politics of China* (4th ed.), London: Palgrave.
- Schiavenza, M. (2013) "What Exactly Does It Mean That the U.S. Is Pivoting to Asia? And will it last?" *The Atlantic*, 15 April 2013. Available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/04/what-exactly-does-it-mean-that-the-us-is-pivoting-to-asia/274936/> (Accessed 28 December 2016).
- Schmidt, B. (2012) *International Relations and the First Great Debate*. London: Routledge.
- SCMP (South China Morning Post) (2013) "Japan Never Had Smooth Ties with China, Says Deputy PM Taro Aso," 5 May 2013. Available at: <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1230661/japan-never-had-smooth-ties-china-says-deputy-pm-taro-aso> (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) (2008) "Dushanbe Declaration of the Heads of SCO Member States," 28 August 2008. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/287> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Searle, J. R. (1999) *Mind, Language and Society. Philosophy in the Real World*, New York: Basic Books.
- Seo, J. (2005) "Nationalism and the Problem of Political Legitimacy in China," in White, L. (ed.), *Legitimacy: Ambiguities of Political Success or Failure in East and Southeast Asia*, Singapore: World Scientific, 141–182.
- Shambaugh, D. (2002) "China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process," *The China Quarterly*, (171), 575–596.
- Shambaugh, D. (2011) "Coping with a Conflicted China," *The Washington Quarterly*, 34 (1), 7–27.
- Shen, D. (2013) Personal Communication in Shanghai, 18 November 2013.
- Shen, S. and S. Breslin (eds.) (2010) *Online Chinese Nationalism and China's Bilateral Relations*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.
- Shi, Y. (2015) Personal Communication in Beijing, 15 April 2015.
- Shih, C-Y. (1988) "National Role Conception as Foreign Policy Motivation: The Psychocultural Bases of Chinese Diplomacy," *Political Psychology*, (9): 599–631.
- Shirk, S. (2008) *China: A Fragile Superpower*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shirk, S. (2011) "Changing Media, Changing Foreign Policy," in Shirk, S. (ed.) *Changing Media, Changing China*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 225–251.
- Sinkkonen, E. (2013) "Nationalism, Patriotism and Foreign Policy Attitudes among Chinese University Students," *The China Quarterly*, (4), 1045–1063.
- Snyder, R. C., H. W. Bruck, and B. Sapin (1962/2002) *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Song, Y-H. and K. Zou (eds.) (2014) *Major Law and Policy Issues in the South China Sea: European and American Perspectives*, Farnham: Ashgate.
- Song, X. (2001) "Building International Relations Theory with Chinese Characteristics," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 10 (26), 61–74.

- Sørensen, C. T. N. (2008) *The Contingent Rise of China: The Development in Chinese Post-Cold War Security Policy*, Copenhagen: Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.
- Sørensen, C. T. N. (2013) "Is China Becoming More Aggressive? A Neoclassical Realist Analysis," *Asian Perspective*, (37), 363–385.
- Southerland, M. (2016) "China's Island Building in the South China Sea: Damage to the Marine Environment, Implications, and International Law," U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 12 April 2016. Available at: http://origin.www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/China's%20Island%20Building%20in%20the%20South%20China%20Sea_0.pdf (Accessed 27 December 2016).
- Spitzer, K. (2012) "Why Japan Is Still Not Sorry Enough?" *Time*, 11 December 2012. Available at: <http://nation.time.com/2012/12/11/why-japan-is-still-not-sorry-enough/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Suganuma, U. (2015) "Japan and China: Senkaku/Diaoyu and the Okinawa/Liuqiu problems," in Hara, K. (ed.) *The San Francisco System and Its Legacies: Continuation, transformation, and historical reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific*, London/New York: Routledge, 55–79.
- Suryadinata, L. (1987) "Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia: Problems and Prospects," *Journal of International Affairs*, (1), 135–151.
- Suryadinata, L. (2007) *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Suzuki, C. (1970) "China's Relations with Inner Asia," in Fairbank, J. K. (ed.) *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (2nd ed.), Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 180–197.
- Tan, A. T. H. (2013) *East and South-East Asia: International Relations and Security Perspectives*, London: Routledge.
- Tang, J. (2003) "Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan Gives a Press Conference During the 1st Session of the 10th NPC," 6 March 2003. Available at: <http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t28049.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Tang, J. (2005) “唐家璇国务委员在第三届东亚论坛开幕式上的致辞” (Tang Jiaxuan Guowuweiyuan zai di Sanjie Dongya Luntan Kaimu Shishang de Zhici), 31 October 2005. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn//gxh/zlb/ldzyjh/t219076.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tang, J. (2008) “国务委员唐家璇在日本各界人士招待会上的致辞” (Guowuweiyuan Tang Jiaxuan zai Riben Gejie Renshi Zhaodai Huishang de Zhici), 21 February 2008. Available at: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/123/wjb/zzjg/yzs/xwlb/t408899.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tang, J. (2009) 劲雨煦风 (*Jing Yu Xu Feng*), Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe.
- Tang, J. (2010a) “Keynote Speech by Tang Jiaxuan, Chair of the Chinese Side At the Opening Session of the First Meeting of The Fifth China-Japan Friendship Committee for the 21st Century,” Yangzhou, 7 February 2010. Available at: <http://np.china-embassy.org/eng/zgwj/t657766.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tang, J. (2010b) “唐家璇首席委员在第五届中日友好 21 世纪委员会首次会议闭幕式上的总结发言” (Tang Jiaxuan Shouxi Weiyuan zai di Wujie ZhongRi Youhao 21 Shiji Weiyuanhui Shouci Huiyu Bimushishang de Zongjie Fayan), Yangzhou, 9 February 2010. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/celt/chn/xwdt/t657208.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tang, J. (2010c) “唐家璇在出席日本前首相大平正芳百年诞辰纪念会上的致辞” (Tang Jiaxuan zai Chuxi Riben Qianshouxiang Daping Zhengfang Bainian Danchen Jinianhuishang de Zhici), Tokyo, 3 March 2010. Available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gjhdqzz_681964/sgwyh_682446/zyjh_682456/t674027.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tang, J. (2010d) “唐家璇同志在中华日本学会和全国日本经济学会联合年会上的讲话” (Tang Jiaxuan Tongzhi zai Zhonghua Riben Xuehui he Quanguo Riben Jingji Xuehui Lianhe Nianhuishang de Jianghua), Shanghai, 30 May 2010. Available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gjhdqzz_681964/sgwyh_682446/zyjh_682456/t709589.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Tang, J. (2011a) “坚定不移推进中日战略互惠关系” (Jianding Buyi Tuijin ZhongRi Zhanlue Guanxi), Keynote Speech by Tang Jiaxuan at the Opening Ceremony of the 4th China-Japan Forum, Beijing, 11 January 2011. Available at: <http://news.163.com/11/0111/18/6Q4UB0KT00014JB5.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tang, J. (2011b) “Work Together for a Bright Future of Northeast Asia,” Keynote Speech by Tang Jiaxuan at China-Japan-ROK Academic Forum, Seoul, 19 October 2011. Available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t873180.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tang, J. (2011c) “唐家璇首席委员在第五届中日友好 21 世纪委员会第三次会议开幕式上的主旨发言” (Tang Jiaxuan Shouxi Wei yuan zai di Wujie ZhongRi Youhao 21 Shiji Wei yu an hui di Sanci Huiyi Kaimushishang de Zhuzhi Fayan), Beijing, 23 October 2011. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/gxh/zlb/ldzyjh/t869927.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tang, J. (2012a) “继往开来,共创中日战略互惠关系新局面” (Ji wang Kai lai, Gon chu ang Zhong Ri Zhan lue Hui hui Guan xi Xin Ju mian), *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* (4), 1–7.
- Tang, J. (2012b) “维护大局 管控危机 推动中日关系健康稳定发展” (Wei hu Da ju Guan kong Wei ji, Tui dong Zhong Ri Guan xi Jian kang Wen ding Fazhan), 29 August 2012. Available at: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cedk/chn/zgwj/t964787.htm> (Accessed 28 December 2016).
- Tang, Y. (2008) “顺势而为, 应对变局” (Shun shi Er wei, Ying dui Bian ju), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (9), 23–25.
- Thayer, C. A. (2011) “Chinese Assertiveness in the South China Sea and Southeast Asian Responses,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 30 (2), 77–104.
- Thies, C. (2010) “Role Theory and Foreign Policy,” in Denemark, R. A. (ed.) *The International Relations Encyclopedia*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Thies, C. (2016) “The US and China: Altercast Roles and Changing Power in the 20th Century,” in Harnisch, S., S. Bersick and J.-C. Gottwald (eds.) (2016) *China’s International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?*, London/New York: Routledge, 99–111.

- Tiezzi, S. (2014a) "Japan Seeks Chinese Compensation Over 2010 Boat Collision Incident," *The Diplomat*, 14 February 2014. Available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2014/02/japan-seeks-chinese-compensation-over-2010-boat-collision-incident/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tiezzi, S. (2014b) "Rioters in Vietnam Attack Chinese, Taiwanese Factories," *The Diplomat*, 14 May 2014. Available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/rioters-in-vietnam-attack-chinese-taiwanese-factories/> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Tønnesson, S. (2014) "Could China and Vietnam Resolve the Conflicts in South China Sea?" in Song, Y-H. and K. Zou (eds.) *Major Law and Policy Issues in the South China Sea: European and American Perspectives*, Farnham: Ashgate, 207–245.
- TT (Taipei Times) (2005) "China Defends Shooting of Vietnamese," *Taipei Times*, 16 January 2005. Available at: <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/world/archives/2005/01/16/2003219623> (Accessed 28 December 2016).
- Turner, R. H. (2001) "Role Theory," in Turner, J. H. (ed.) *Handbook of Sociological Theory*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 233–255.
- UKHC (United Kingdom House of Commons) (2006) "Seventh Report of Session 2005–2006," Volume I. House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 19 July 2006. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmfaaff/860/86002.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- UN (United Nations) (1992) "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone," 25 February 1992. Available at: http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/CHN_1992_Law.pdf (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- UN (United Nations) (1996) "Declarations and Statements related to the ratification of UNCLOS." Available at: http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_declarations.htm#China%20Upon%20ratification (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- UN (United Nations) (2006) "Declarations and Statements of UNCLOS." Available at: http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_declarations.htm#China%20after%20ratification (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- UN (United Nations) (2009) "Statement in Response to the Joint Submission by Malaysia and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam," 7 May 2009. Available at: http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/mysvnm33_09/chn_2009re_mys_vnm_e.pdf (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- U.S. Department of State (2009) "Beginning a New Era of Diplomacy in Asia," Press Conference by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Jakarta, 18 February 2009. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/02/119422.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Vicziany, M. (2003) "State Responses to Islamic Terrorism in Western China and Their Impact on South Asia," *Contemporary South Asia*, (2), 243–62.
- Vinayak, H.V., F. Thompson and O. Tonby (2014) "Understanding ASEAN: Seven Things You Need to Know," McKinsey & Company, May 2014. Available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/understanding-asean-seven-things-you-need-to-know> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Walker, S. G. (1987) *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press
- Waltz, K. N. (1959) *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Waltz, K. N. (1979/2010) *Theory of International Politics*, Long Grove: Waveland Press.
- Wang, G. (1970) "Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: Background Essay," in Fairbank, J. K. (ed.) *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (2nd ed.), Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 34–62.
- Wang, J. (2010) "世界大国与战略环境: 中国国际角色的新课题" (Shijie Daguo yu Zhanlue Huanjing: Zhongguo Guoji Juesede Xin Keti), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (4), 38–44.
- Wang, Y. (2004) "全球化进程中的亚洲区域合作" (Quanqiuhua Jinchengzhong de Yazhou Quyu Hezuo), *Shijie Zhishi*, (10), 56–57.

- Wang, Y. (2013a) "Exploring the Path of Major-Country Diplomacy With Chinese Characteristics," Remarks at the Luncheon of the Second World Peace Forum, Beijing, 27 June 2013. Available at:
http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/2461_663310/t1053908.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wang, Y. (2014) "2014, 中国特色大国外交风生水起," (2014, Zhongguo Tese Daguo Waijiao Fengsheng Shuiqi), 31 December 2014. Available at:
<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjbzhd/t1224950.shtml> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wang, Y. (2016) "携手打造人类命运共同体" (Xieshou Dazao Renlei Mingyun Gongtongti), 31 May 2016. Available at:
<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjbzhd/t1368155.shtml> (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Weiss, J. C. (2014) *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wen, J. (2003a) "共同谱写东亚合作的新篇章" (Gongtong Puxie yu Dongya Hezuo de Xin Pianzhang), speech at the 7th ASEAN+3 Summit in Bali, 7 October 2003. Available at:
http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gjhdqzz_681964/lhg_682542/zyjh_682552/t27172.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2003b) "全面深入合作 促进和平繁荣" (Quanmian Shenru Hezuo, Cujin Heping Fanrong), speech at ASEAN-China Summit in Bali, 8 October 2003. Available at:
http://www.china.com.cn/zhuanti2005/txt/2003-11/20/content_5446308.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2004a) "加强合作 互惠共赢" (Jiaqiang Hezuo Huhui Gongying), speech at the 8th ASEAN+3 Summit in Vientiane, 29 November 2004. Available at:
http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2005/content_63269.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2004b) "深化战略伙伴关系 推进全方位合作" (Shenhua Zhanlue Huoban Guanxi Tujin Quanfangwei Hezuo), speech at the 8th ASEAN-China Summit in Vientiane, 29 November 2004. Available at:
<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/1024/3020456.html> (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Wen, J. (2005a) “巩固深化合作 共创美好未来” (Gonggu Shenhua Hezuo Gongchuang Meihao Weilai), speech at the 9th ASEAN+3 Summit in Kuala Lumpur, 12 December 2005. Available at:
http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/zyjh_674906/t230074.shtml
 (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2005b) “深化全面合作 推进中国-东盟战略伙伴关系不断发展” (Shenhua Quanmian Hezuo Tuijin Zhongguo-Dongmeng Zhanlue Huoban Guanxi Buduan Fazhan), speech at the 9th ASEAN-China Summit in Kuala Lumpur, 12 December 2005. Available at:
http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2005-12/12/content_3912399.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2006a) “温家宝总理答中外记者问” (Wen Jiabao Zongli Da Zhongwai Jizhe Wen), Beijing, 14 March 2006. Available at:
<http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn//gxh/zlb/ldzyjh/t240297.htm> (Accessed 28 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2006) “携手奋进 共创中国-东盟关系的美好未来” (Xieshou Fenjin Gongchuang Zhongguo-Dongmeng Guanxi de Meihao Weilai), speech at the Summit Marking the 15th Anniversary of the Establishment of China-ASEAN Dialogue in Nanning, 30 October 2006. Available at:
http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2006-10/30/content_5268467.htm (Accessed 28 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2007a) “共建和平, 繁荣的和谐东亚” (Gongjian Heping, Fanrong de Hexie Dongya), speech at the 10th ASEAN+3 Summit in Cebu, 14 January 2007. Available at:
http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/200701/15/content_12255119.htm
 (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2007b) “共同谱写中国—东盟关系的新篇章” (Gongtong Puxie Zhongguo-Dongmeng Guanxi de Xin Pianzhang), speech at the 10th ASEAN-China Summit in Cebu, 14 January 2007. Available at:
http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2007-01/14/content_5604871.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2007c) “为了友谊与合作” (Weile Youyi yu Hezuo), speech at the Japanese Diet, Tokyo, 12 April 2007. Available at:
http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2007-04/12/content_5968135.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Wen, J. (2007d) “凝聚共识 再创辉煌” (Ningju Gongshi Zaichuang Huihuang), speech at the 11th ASEAN+3 Summit in Singapore, 20 November 2007. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2007-11/20/content_7116196.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2010a) “在第十三次东盟与中日韩领导人会议上的讲话” (Zai di Shisanci Dongmeng yu ZhongRiHan Lingdao Huiyishang de Jianghua), speech at the 13th ASEAN+3 Summit, Hanoi, 28 October, 2010. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-10/30/c_12718138.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2010b) “在第十三次中国与东盟领导人会议上的讲话” (Zai di Shisanci Dongmeng yu Zhongguo yu Dongmen Lingdao Huiyishang de Jianghua), speech at the 13th ASEAN-China Summit, Hanoi, 29 October 2010. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-10/30/c_12718147.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2011a) “温家宝在东盟与中日韩 (10+3) 领导人会议上的讲话” (Wen Jiabao Zai Dongmeng yu ZhongRiHan (10+3) Lingdao Huiyishang de Jianghua), speech at the ASEAN and China, Japan and South Korea (10+3) Summit, Bali, 18 November 2011. Available at: http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2011-11/18/content_1997604.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wen, J. (2011b) “在第十四次中国—东盟 (10+1) 领导人会议 暨中国—东盟建立对话关系 20 周年纪念峰会上的讲话” (Zai di Shisici Zhongguo - Dongmeng (10+1) yu Lingdao Huiyi ji Zhongguo-Dongmeng Jianli Duihua Guanxi 20 Zhounian Jinian Fenghuishang de Jianghua), speech at the 14th China-Asean (10+1) Summit and the 20th Anniversary Summit of the Establishment of China-ASEAN Dialogue, Bali, 18 November 2011. Available at: http://www.china.com.cn/policy/txt/2011-11/18/content_23953378.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Wendt, A. (1987) “The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory,” *International Organization*, (3), 335–370.
- Wendt, A. (1992) “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization*, (2), 391–425.
- Wendt, A. (1994) “Collective Identity Formation and the International State,” *The American Political Science Review*, (2), 384–396

- Wendt, A. (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wendt, A. (2004) "The state as person in international theory," *Review of International Studies*, (30), 289–316.
- Whiting, A. and S. Sheng (1958) *Sinkiang: Pawn or Pivot?* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Wiio, O. (1985) "Information Economy and Information Society," *Media in Education and Development*, 18(4), 187–191.
- Xinhua (2006) "Declaration of Heads of Member States of SCO," 5 July 2005, updated June 12, 2006. Available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-06/12/content_6020345.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Xinhua (2009) "Death toll in Xinjiang riot rises to 140," 6 July 2009. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/06/content_11661325.htm (Accessed 26 December 2016).
- Xu, J. (2008) "中间力量的兴起与世界格局的结构性变化" (Zhongjian Liliang de Xingqi yu Shijie Geju de Jiegouxing Bianhua), *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu*, (2), 1–5.
- Xu, T. (2003) "论上海合作组织的机制化" (Lun Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi de Jizhizhua), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (6), 7–13.
- Xu, T. (2005) "政局走势充满变数" (Zhengju Zoushi Chongman Bianshu), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (2), 5–7.
- Xu, T. (2005b) "中亚区域合作与上海合作组织" (Zhongya Quyu Hezuo yu Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (11), 21–27.
- Xu, T. (2006) "上合组织建立预防地区冲突机制的实践意义" (Shanghe Zuzhi Jianli Yufang Diqu Chongtu Jizhi de Shijian Yiyi), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (12), 12–16, 22.
- Yang, B. (2003) "从战略高度定位中日关系" (Cong Zhanlue Gaodu Dingwei Zhongri Guanxi), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (10), 1–3.
- Yang, J. (2008) "改革开放以来的中国外交" (Gaige Kaifang Yilai de Zhongguo Waijiao), 16 September 2008, Available at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/zyjh_674906/t512782.shtml (Accessed 26 December 2016).

- Yang, J. (2011) "'Great Power Style' in China's Economic Diplomacy: Filling the Shoes of a Benign Hegemon?" *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, (6), 63–81.
- Yang, L. (2010) “中亚局势的现状与前景” (Zhongya Jushi de Xianzhuang yu Qianjing), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (3), 32–37.
- Yang, L. and C. Kong (2010) “美俄关系‘重启’前景分析” (Mei'E Guanxi "Chongqi" Qianjing Fenxi), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (11) 46–51.
- Yang, L. (2012) “当前中亚五国安全形势评析” (Dangqian Zhongya Wuguo Anquan Xingshi Pingxi), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (11), 21–27.
- Zehfuss, M. (2002) *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zhang, C. (2010) “Beyond Sino-ASEAN Relations: Online Chinese Nationalism Toward Southeast Asia,” in Shen, S. and S. Breslin (eds.) *Online Chinese Nationalism and China's Bilateral Relations*, Plymouth: Lexington Books, 159–177.
- Zhang, F. (2015) “Confucian Foreign Policy Traditions in Chinese History,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 8 (2), 197–218.
- Zhao, H. (2007) “中国中亚外交的理论和实践” (Zhongguo Zhongya Waijiao de Lilun he Shijian), *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu*, (4), 19–25.
- Zhao, H. (2010) “美国与上海合作组织: 从布什到奥巴马” (Meiguo yu Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi: Cong Bushi dao Aobama), *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (2), 32–38.
- Zhao, H. (2011) “不干涉内政与建设性介入” (Bu Ganshe Neizheng yu Jianshexing Jieru), *Xinjiang Shifan Daxue Xuebao*, 32 (1), 23–29.
- Zhao, H. (2013) Personal Communication in Shanghai, 7 November 2013.
- Zhao, S. (2015) “Rethinking the Chinese World Order: The Imperial Cycle and the Rise of China,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24 (96), 961–982.
- Zheng, B. (2005) “China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status,” *Foreign Affairs*, 84 (5), 18–24.

Zoellick, R. B. (2005) “Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?” remarks to National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, New York, September 21. Available at: <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm> (Accessed 26 December 2016).

